

Saxa judaica loquuntur: Lessons from Early Jewish Inscriptions

Biblical Interpretation Series

Editors in Chief

Paul Anderson (*George Fox University*)

Yvonne Sherwood (*University of Kent*)

Editorial Board

A.K.M. Adam (*University of Oxford*)

Roland Boer (*University of Newcastle, Australia*)

Musa Dube (*University of Botswana*)

Jennifer L. Koosed (*Albright College, Reading, USA*)

Vernon Robbins (*Emory University*)

Annette Schellenberg (*Theological Seminary, San Francisco*)

Carolyn J. Sharp (*Yale Divinity School*)

Johanna Stiebert (*University of Leeds, UK*)

Duane Watson (*Malone University, USA*)

Ruben Zimmermann (*Johannes Gutenberg-Universität, Mainz*)

VOLUME 134

The titles published in this series are listed at *brill.com/bins*

Saxa judaica loquuntur: Lessons from Early Jewish Inscriptions

Radboud Prestige Lectures 2014

By

Pieter W. van der Horst



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Horst, Pieter Willem van der, author.

Saxa Judaica loquuntur : lessons from early Jewish inscriptions : radboud prestige lectures 2014 / by Pieter W. van der Horst.

pages cm. – (Biblical interpretation series, ISSN 0928-0731 ; volume 134)

"Lectures were held at the Radboud University Nijmegen on April 16, 2014"—ECIP foreword.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-90-04-28283-4 ((hardback) : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-90-04-28323-7 (e-book)

1. Jewish epitaphs. 2. Jews—Antiquities. I. Title.

DS111.L.H665 2015

937'.004924—dc23

2014034594

This publication has been typeset in the multilingual “Brill” typeface. With over 5,100 characters covering Latin, IPA, Greek, and Cyrillic, this typeface is especially suitable for use in the humanities. For more information, please see www.brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 0928-0731

ISBN 978-90-04-28283-4 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-28323-7 (e-book)

Copyright 2015 by Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands.

Koninklijke Brill NV incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Nijhoff and Hotei Publishing.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use is granted by Koninklijke Brill NV provided that the appropriate fees are paid directly to The Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Suite 910, Danvers, MA 01923, USA. Fees are subject to change.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Contents

Foreword VII

Preface VIII

Abbreviations IX

1 Early Jewish Epigraphy: Where Do We Stand? 1

2 Jewish Epigraphy and Diaspora: The Case of Asia Minor 27

3 Early Jewish Epigraphy: What Can We Learn? 46

Appendix 1: The Ossuary of James, the Brother of Jesus 67

Appendix 2: The Greek of the Inscriptions 88

Appendix 3: Selected Inscriptions 96

Bibliography 165

Index of Ancient Sources 177

Index of Modern Scholars 181

Index of Names and Subjects 184

About the Author 187

Foreword

The aim of the *Radboud Prestige Lectures in New Testament* is to stimulate high level academic discussion, not only in the Netherlands, but also wider afield. In addition these lectures acknowledge the outstanding work of internationally recognized scholars. The esteemed scholars that are invited to participate in these lectures are widely regarded as leaders in their respective fields in the New Testament. Each one shares their wealth of knowledge and experience on topics of their own choosing.

While the series of lectures are held at the Radboud University Nijmegen, publication of the lectures stimulates further academic research and discussion on the respective topics. The project is done in co-operation with Brill Publishers, who kindly undertake the publication of the lecture series.

Prof. Pieter van der Horst, emeritus professor of the University of Utrecht, Netherlands, delivered the third *Radboud Prestige Lectures in New Testament* that were held in April 2014 at the Radboud University Nijmegen. The lectures dealt with the early Jewish inscriptions and what can be learned from them. The material, which is dealt with in great detail by Prof. van der Horst, offers a comprehensive view and often quite surprising insights into the Jewish life during this period. These lectures were prepared for publication adding some additional material, and are presented in this volume.

Our thanks go not only to Prof. van der Horst, but also to Brill for their willingness to support the lecture series.

Jan van der Watt (DD, DLitt)
Professor in New Testament
Radboud University Nijmegen
May 2014

Preface

The text of this book originated as a series of three lectures given at the Radboud University of Nijmegen on April 16, 2014. The expanded versions of these lectures form the first three chapters of this book. The second part of the book consists of three Appendices the text of which was not suitable for the format of a lecture but which contain important information for the student of early Jewish epigraphy. The third of these Appendices is perhaps the most informative in that it presents text and translation of some 50 ancient Jewish inscriptions with brief explanatory notes. The fact that the first three chapters were written as lectures to be given for various audiences inevitably implies a certain degree of repetition in some of the chapters (so there is some overlap between chapters 2 and 3). I have left this as it is since I am of the opinion that each chapter should be able to stand on its own and be read in its own right.

The title of this book was inspired by that of a well-known and classic introduction to the study of Greek epigraphy in Dutch: J.J.E. Hondius, *Saxa Loquuntur: Inleiding tot de grieksche epigraphiek* (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1938; repr. Chicago: Ares, 1976). I adopted and adapted this title because it is my strong conviction that the texts on the ancient Jewish stones have much to tell us that is of great relevance and that is often unduly neglected.

The author wishes to express his gratitude first and foremost to Professor Jan van der Watt who kindly invited to give the Prestige Lectures of 2014, which I regard as a great honour. I also thank my friend Dr. James Pankhurst for his never failing willingness to correct the English of the first version of the lectures (of course, all remaining errors are mine). I am grateful to Brill Publishers and Cambridge University Press for giving me permission to reuse previously published materials. Finally I wish to thank Louise Schouten and Liesbeth Hugenholtz of Brill for the pleasant co-operation during the production of this book.

Pieter W. van der Horst

pwvdh@xs4all.nl

Zeist, June 2014

Abbreviations

ABD	Anchor Bible Dictionary
AE	Année Épigraphique
AJEC	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
AJPh	American Journal of Philology
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt
BAR	Biblical Archaeology Review
BASOR	Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research
BE	Bulletin Épigraphique
BiOr	Bibliotheca Orientalis
BS	Beth She'arim, inscriptions of
BZ	Biblische Zeitschrift
CEBT	Contributions to Exegesis and Biblical Theology
CIIP	Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae
CIJ	Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum
CPJ	Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum
CRINT	Compendia Rerum Judaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
DNP	Der Neue Pauly
EJJS	European Journal of Jewish Studies
EPRO	Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
IAA	Israel Antiquities Authority
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
IJO	Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis
JIGRE	Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt
JIWE	Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe
JHS	Journal of Hellenic Studies
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies
JSJ	Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSP	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
JQR	Jewish Quarterly Review
MGWJ	Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
NTT	Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift
PACS	Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly

PW	Pauly-Wissowas Realencyklopädie der Altertumswissenschaften
RAC	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum
RB	Revue Biblique
RE	= PW
REJ	Revue des Études Juives
RGRW	Religions in the Graeco-Roman World
RhMus	Rheinisches Museum
Riv. Arch. Crist.	Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana
SEG	Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum
SNTSMS	Society of New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SVTP	Studia ad Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha
TAPA	Transactions of the American Philological Association
TPAPA	Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association
TSAJ	Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
TSMJ	Texts and Studies in Medieval Judaism
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZDPV	Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZPE	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik

Early Jewish Epigraphy: Where Do We Stand?

1 Introduction

My interest in early Jewish epigraphy was initially triggered by a chance find, more than 25 years ago. In the Utrecht University Library, I was looking up an article in a volume but I could not find it immediately and had to leaf through the whole issue to look for it. While doing so my eye was caught by a curious line of Greek text saying: βοήθησον, κύριε, τοῦ ῥαββί, “Lord, help the rabbi!” The first thing to strike my eye was, of course, the strange genitive (τοῦ ῥαββί) instead of the usual dative, a phenomenon, however, that I could explain in view of the gradual disappearance of the dative from classical Greek in the post-classical period. But much stranger was the interpretation of this text by the Italian author of the article. The Greek text was inscribed upon a pillar found during excavations in the Cyrenaica in ancient Libya and without the slightest justification the Italian editor identified the *rabbi* as the bishop of the local Christian community. I decided on the spot to write an article in order to rectify this obviously wrong interpretation.¹ At about the same time, Martin Hengel urged me in a private conversation to take a close look at a new inscription from Aphrodisias (in Turkey) which he thought could shed new light upon the Jewish diaspora in Asia Minor (on this more below). I did so and this resulted in another article.²

The research I had to do when preparing these articles opened my eyes to the rather sorry state of the study of ancient Jewish epigraphy (i.e., in the mid-80s of the previous century). There was no really comprehensive and authoritative collection of Jewish inscriptions from the Hellenistic to the Byzantine period. To be accurate, there was the *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum* by the Catholic scholar Jean-Baptiste Frey, published in 2 volumes in 1936 and (posthumously)

-
- 1 For all the details see P.W. van der Horst, “‘Lord, Help the Rabbi.’ The Interpretation of SEG XXI 1578B,” *JJS* 38 (1987) 102–106, reprinted in my *Essays on the Jewish World of Early Christianity* (NTOA 14; Freiburg in der Schweiz: Universitätsverlag—Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 182–186.
 - 2 See my ‘Jews and Christians in Aphrodisias in the Light of Their Relations in Other Cities of Asia Minor,’ *NTT* 43 (1989) 106–121; reprinted in my *Essays on the Jewish World of Early Christianity* 166–181.

in 1952.³ However, this work is very far from perfect, to put it mildly; it is incomplete, but it also contains inscriptions which do not belong there; and there are many other signs of sloppiness.⁴ Another desideratum was an annual overview of newly found material such as existed (and still exists) for (mostly pagan and Christian) Greek and Latin epigraphical material (*Bulletin Épigraphique* [BE], *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* [SEG], *Année Épigraphique* [AE] and others). The publications of most of the new finds in the field of ancient Jewish epigraphy were scattered over a very wide variety of journals in many languages and over *Festschriften*. For the uninitiated it was almost impossible to find one's way to all this material. What one needs in such a situation is simply an introduction to the study of early Jewish epigraphy to help the beginning student. But such a thing did not exist. For that reason, I decided that I had to write such an introduction myself. And I did so in the academic year 1990/1991, several months of which I spent on a sabbatical leave at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, where I collected most of the material. The book appeared in 1991 as *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs. An Introductory Survey of a Millennium of Jewish Funerary Epigraphy (300 BCE–700 CE)*.⁵

There were several reasons for this relative neglect of the area of early Jewish epigraphy. Pagan and Christian Greek and Latin epigraphy have flourished since the 19th century and ever since then it has been an integral part of the study of the world of classical antiquity. This was a logical consequence of the enormous quantity of inscriptions in these fields, which grew in pace with the growing number of archaeological excavations in many areas of the classical world. But most classical epigraphists were not at all interested in Jewish material; they had no eye for it.⁶ Moreover, Jewish material was very scarce in comparison to this other material. On the other hand, Semitic epigraphers

3 J.-B. Frey, *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum. Recueil des inscriptions juives qui vont du III^e siècle avant Jésus-Christ au VII^e siècle de notre ère* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 2 vols., 1936–1952). This work will be referred to as *CIJ*; the sometimes used abbreviation *CII* should be avoided since it also stands for *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum*. Frey died in 1940.

4 Vol. 1 of *CIJ* was re-edited by B. Lifshitz, who wrote a very extensive Prolegomenon to this 1975 reprint in which he proposed a considerable number of corrections and additions. But, unfortunately, Lifshitz died before he could start to work on vol. 2 (covering Asia and Egypt), which is still more deficient than vol. 1.

5 Kampen: Kok-Pharos, 1991.

6 This is painfully illustrated in the third edition of the *Guide de l'épigraphiste* (eds. F. Bérard *et alii*, Paris: Éditions Rue d'Ulm, 2000). This otherwise excellent and authoritative reference work is extremely weak on Jewish epigraphy.

focused on early material, from the biblical period, even though that was scarce as well, or on the many inscriptions from pre-biblical times such as the Ras Shamra texts from Ugarit. So postbiblical Jewish inscriptions fell more or less between two stools. But apart from that, in Jewish studies, epigraphy was never part of the regular curriculum. The focus always was (and often still is) on the literary evidence such as the rabbinic corpora, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Pseudepigrapha, Philo and Josephus, etcetera. The stones fell outside the horizon of most scholars of ancient Judaism. And this is understandable. When one has such an abundance of relevant literature at one's disposal, well readable and legible at that, why then care about stones with often barely legible, frequently incomplete and broken pieces of text that are far from clear? The potential relevance of this material was mostly lost on them.

But relevance there is, if only because the inscriptions reflect a much broader spectrum of society than the literary sources do, written as the latter are by the elite. Inscriptions derive 'from the nearly illiterate poor (...) to the wealthy patrons of funerary poetry.'⁷ Moreover, inscriptions sometimes express religious views that have not been censored out by a later normative tradition. There is no need to say how important that is for the study of ancient Judaism. In general it can be said that inscriptions often yield insights into Jewish ways of living and thinking that we do not have access to in the literary remains of ancient Judaism.

2 The Evidence

My book of 1991, I am happy to say, is by now outdated. It is outdated because of an unprecedented rapid development of the field of Jewish epigraphy in the last two decades. This flurry—or rather, this explosion—of activities in this field resulting in an outpouring of publications of inscriptions since the early nineties is very impressive.⁸ In the decades since Frey, but especially in the two decades since my own book appeared, a whole series of major publications of Jewish inscription corpora saw the light and they form the basis

7 L.H. Kant, 'Jewish Inscriptions in Greek and Latin,' *ANRW* II 20/2 (1987) 671–713, quote on 674. See also F.M. Aber, 'Epitaphs: Testimonies to Jewish Living,' *Judaism* 6 (1957) 311–318.

8 The following survey is largely based upon P.W. van der Horst, 'Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis: A Review Article,' *JSJ* 36 (2005) 65–83; idem, 'Biblical Quotations in Judaeo-Greek Inscriptions,' in B.J. Koet, S. Moyise & J. Verheyden (eds.), *The Scriptures of Israel in Jewish and Christian Tradition: Essays in Honour of Maarten J.J. Menken* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 148; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 363–376.

of the present investigation. Let me first mention the most important partial collections from the four decades between Frey's second volume of 1952 and the new harvest that began in 1992. To mention only the most significant ones: we have the group of epitaphs from Dominus Flevit (Mt. of Olives) edited by Bagatti and Milik.⁹ Lewis published the inscriptions of Egypt,¹⁰ Le Bohec those of the rest of North Africa,¹¹ Lüderitz those of the Cyrenaica,¹² Scheiber those of Hungary,¹³ Leon those of Rome,¹⁴ Mazar, Schwabe, Lifshitz, and Avigad those of Beth She'arim,¹⁵ Lifshitz the synagogal donor inscriptions in general,¹⁶ Naveh the Hebrew and Aramaic synagogue inscriptions from Israel and elsewhere,¹⁷ Roth-Gerson the Greek ones from the synagogues in Israel,¹⁸ Hüttenmeister and Reeg all synagogue inscriptions from Israel,¹⁹ and Rahmani those on the ossuaries from Israel.²⁰

By the beginning of the 1990s, some 2000 inscriptions were available to the scholarly world. Today, however, we have some 4,000 Jewish inscriptions from the period between Alexander the Great and Muhammed, (two and a half times

-
- 9 B. Bagatti and J.T. Milik, *Gli scavi del Dominus Flevit (Monte Oliveto—Gerusalemme). Parte I: La necropoli del periodo romano* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Publishing House, 1958).
 - 10 D.M. Lewis, 'Appendix 1: The Jewish Inscriptions of Egypt,' in: V.A. Tcherikover, A. Fuks, M. Stern, *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* (3 vols., Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1957–1964) 3:138–166.
 - 11 Y. le Bohec, 'Inscriptions juives et judaïsantes de l'Afrique Romaine,' *Antiquités Africaines* 17 (1981) 165–207 (this collection is now in need of updating).
 - 12 G. Lüderitz, *Corpus jüdischer Zeugnisse aus der Cyrenaica* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1983).
 - 13 A. Scheiber, *Jewish Inscriptions in Hungary from the Third Century to 1686* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó—Leiden: Brill, 1983).
 - 14 H.J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1960) 263–346 (reprinted with *addenda et corrigenda* by C. Osiek in 1995 [Peabody: Hendrickson]).
 - 15 B. Mazar, M. Schwabe, B. Lifshitz, N. Avigad, *Beth She'arim I–III* (3 vols., Jerusalem: Mas-sada—New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1973–1976).
 - 16 B. Lifshitz, *Donateurs et fondateurs dans les synagogues juives* (Paris: Gabalda, 1967).
 - 17 J. Naveh, *On Stone and Mosaic: The Aramaic and Hebrew Inscriptions from Ancient Synagogues* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1978) [Hebrew].
 - 18 L. Roth-Gerson, *The Greek Inscriptions from the Synagogues in Israel* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, 1987) [Hebrew].
 - 19 F. Hüttenmeister & G. Reeg, *Die antiken Synagogen in Israel* (2 vols., Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1977). Synagogue inscriptions from the period before 200 (both in Israel and the diaspora) are also collected in A. Runesson, D.D. Binder & B. Olsson, *The Ancient Synagogue from its Origins to 200 CE. A Source Book* (AJEC 72; Leiden: Brill, 2008).
 - 20 Y. Rahmani, *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries in the Collections of the State of Israel* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994)

as many as in Frey's *CIJ* which contained some 1600).²¹ This dramatic increase in numbers is primarily due to the fact that especially in the last two decades the pace of the study of ancient Jewish inscriptions has greatly accelerated. A sudden flurry of epigraphic activity took place, with David Noy as the main driving force.²² In 1992, together with William Horbury, Noy published *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt*;²³ in 1993 Noy as sole editor published the first volume of his *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe I: Italy (excluding the City of Rome), Spain and Gaul*;²⁴ and in 1995 the second volume appeared as *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe II: The City of Rome*.²⁵ A new peak of epigraphic activity was reached in 2004 when the long awaited three volumes of the *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis* (henceforth *IJO*) were published simultaneously.²⁶ Two of the three volumes were edited by Noy in collaboration with Bloedhorn and Panayotov (Greece, the Greek islands including Cyprus, the rest of eastern Europe, and Syria); only the volume on Asia Minor was done by Ameling alone.

Apart from these six major volumes,²⁷ in 1999 E. Leigh Gibson published the Jewish manumission inscriptions of the Bosporan kingdom.²⁸ Also in 1999,

-
- 21 For comparison's sake: we have hundreds of thousands of pagan and Christian inscriptions in Greek and Latin; so 4,000 is in fact a tiny number.
 - 22 In my article 'Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis: A Review Article,' *JSJ* 36 (2005) 65–83, at p. 67, I call Noy 'the "Frey" of our days,' but I hasten to add that the quality of Noy's work certainly surpasses that of Frey.
 - 23 W. Horbury & D. Noy *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). See my review in *JSJ* 25 (1994) 320–323. Abbr. *JIGRE*.
 - 24 D. Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe I: Italy (excluding the City of Rome), Spain and Gaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). See my review in *JTS* n.s. 45 (1994) 701–704. Abbr. *JIWE I*.
 - 25 D. Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe II: The City of Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). See my review in *JTS* n.s. 47 (1996) 256–259. Abbr. *JIWE II*.
 - 26 D. Noy, A. Panayotov & H. Bloedhorn, *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis*: Vol. I, *Eastern Europe* (TSAJ 101; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004). W. Ameling, *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis*: Vol. II: *Kleinasien* (TSAJ 99; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004). D. Noy & H. Bloedhorn, *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis*: Vol. III: *Syria and Cyprus* (TSAJ 102; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004). See my review in *JSJ* 36 (2005) 65–83.
 - 27 On these volumes Tessa Rajak, *Translation and Survival: The Greek Bible of the Ancient Jewish Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 93 n. 2, remarked: "The publication of the new epigraphic corpora for Jewish inscriptions, *JIGRE*, *JIWE* (2 vols.), and *IJO* (3 vols.), is perhaps the most important recent development in the field [i.e., the study of the Jewish diaspora]."
 - 28 E.L. Gibson, *The Jewish Manumission Inscriptions of the Bosporan Kingdom* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999). See also Appendix 3 ('Inscriptions from the Bosporan Kingdom') in

E. Miranda published the Jewish inscriptions of the great Jewish community of Phrygian Hierapolis.²⁹ And in 2001 John Kroll finally published the important Greek inscriptions of the Sardis synagogue (they had been found some 40 years before!).³⁰ But all of this material (from the Bosphorus, Hierapolis, and Sardis) has now also been included in the volumes of *IJO*. Further there was of course the usual host of minor publications in various journals.³¹ The only area that is still partly lacking in these recent publications is the Land of Israel itself. For that gap we will have to await the results of the Israeli project *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae* (*CIIP*), but that enterprise has only just started to yield its first results. The *CIIP* will be a new corpus of all inscriptions (not only Jewish, but pagan and Christian as well), in all languages, arranged topographically, found in Israel (including the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights) and dating from the 4th century BCE to the 7th century CE. The corpus will include a full re-editing of every text, a drawing or photograph of the inscription, textual apparatus, English translation, and commentary. The estimate is that there will be between 12,000 and 13,000 texts in the corpus, at least some 2000 of which (but probably more) are Jewish.³² In the last three years, the first three volumes of the project were published, covering the material from Jerusalem and Caesarea Maritima (and surroundings).³³ We will have to await

I. Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its First-Century Setting*, vol. 5: *Diaspora Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans—Carlisle: Pater Noster, 1996), 228–246.

- 29 E. Miranda, 'La comunità giudaica di Hierapolis di Frigia,' *Epigraphica Anatolica* 31 (1999) 109–156. On these inscriptions see P.W. van der Horst, 'The Jews of Ancient Phrygia,' in *EJJS* 2 (2008 [2009]) 283–292; repr. in my *Studies in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (AJEC 87; Leiden: Brill, 2014).
- 30 J.H. Kroll, 'The Greek Inscriptions of the Sardis Synagogue,' *HTR* 94 (2001) 5–127. See the discussion in P.W. van der Horst, 'The Synagogue of Sardis and Its Inscriptions,' in my *Jews and Christians in Their Graeco-Roman Context. Selected Essays on Early Judaism, Samaritanism, Hellenism, and Christianity* (WUNT 196; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) 43–52.
- 31 For short surveys see M.H. Williams, 'Jewish Inscriptions of the Graeco-Roman Period—An Update,' *Bulletin of Judaeo-Greek Studies* 33 (2003–2004) 40–46. For the importance of epigraphical material for the study of ancient Judaism in general see Williams, 'The Contribution of Jewish Inscriptions to the Study of Judaism,' in W. Horbury *et alii* (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 11: *The Early Roman Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 75–93.
- 32 I owe thanks for this information to Jonathan Price of Tel Aviv University who initiated the project together with Leah di Segni of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.
- 33 H.M. Cotton, *et alii*, *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae. Vol. 1: Jerusalem (Part 1): 1–704* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2010); W. Ameling *et alii*, *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaesti-*

the completion of that project, however, before we can say that Frey's *CIJ* definitively belongs to the past. Unfortunately, much epigraphic material that still awaits discovery in Arab lands (Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia) will probably never see the light because Islamic culture is not interested in the pre-Islamic Jewish historical remains of its countries, if not worse.

One final remark: the Israeli scholars Price and Misgav point to an important factor complicating the study of Jewish epigraphy. What they say is something not everyone realizes, so they deserve to be quoted in full:

Another factor skewing the sample is the high destruction rate of Jewish inscriptions. This is of course true for almost all types of inscriptions from antiquity, but it is even more restricting in the case of Jewish texts, given the Jews' dispersion over the huge, far-flung tracts of the Roman empire and beyond the Euphrates and their relatively small numbers in most regions: the loss of a synagogue or a Jewish cemetery, which could have been the only way of identifying the existence of a Jewish community, is proportionally a greater loss than that of a pagan temple or a set of Roman epitaphs. The places where the Jewish population was most concentrated generally suffered the worst episodes of destruction, especially the Land of Israel, where repeated conquests had particularly harsh effects, and Egypt. This, combined with heavy looting of known sites, has resulted in incalculable epigraphic losses.³⁴

This has been a long and rather boring enumeration of publications, but this listing had as its sole purpose to bring home to what degree the study of early Jewish epigraphy has been revolutionized in recent years.³⁵ I know of no other

nae, volume 11: Caesarea and the Middle Coast: 1121–2160 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2011); H.M. Cotton, et alii, *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae, volume 1: Jerusalem, Part 2: 705–1120* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2012).

34 J.J. Price and H. Misgav, 'Jewish Inscriptions and Their Use,' in Sh. Safrai, Z. Safrai, J. Schwartz, P.J. Tomson (eds.), *The Literature of the Sages, Part 2* (CRINT 11/3b; Assen: Royal Van Gorcum—Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 461–483, here 462.

35 See also the remarks by Margaret Williams, 'The Epigraphy of the Jewish Diaspora since the Publication of Schürer (revised, vol. III, 1986),' *Bulletin of Judaeo-Greek Studies* 35 (2004–2005) 26–33. She compares the evidence for the diaspora reviewed by Fergus Millar in E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, vol. III/1 (rev. ed. by G. Vermes et al.; Edinburgh: Clark 1986), 3–86, with the vastly increased data two decades after Millar wrote: "Many Jewish settlements that figure neither in any ancient literary source nor in Millar's survey can now be identified, especially in inland Asia Minor where vigorous epigraphic mapping has been ongoing during the past few decades" (28).

field in the humanities in which the evidence to be investigated has more than doubled in one generation. If only for this reason, this fascinating field of research deserves our attention. But we now first have to turn to a knotty problem, that of defining criteria for identifying Jewish inscriptions.

3 Criteria for Identifying Jewish Inscriptions

What is it that makes an inscription Jewish? What are the minimal requirements for an epitaph to be regarded as certainly (or almost certainly) Jewish? This difficult question is a matter of much scholarly debate.³⁶ In my book *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs* I argued as follows. In order not to distort the picture we want to draw, it is of paramount importance to define which criteria are valid and which are not in making a distinction between Jewish and non-Jewish material. It is clear, of course, that an epitaph found in a Jewish catacomb or cemetery, containing biblical names with the term *Ioudaios* added, referring to biblical passages, mentioning the function of *archisynagôgos*, and adorned with symbols like the *menorah*, *ethrog*, *lulav* or *shofar*—that such an epitaph should be regarded as a Jewish inscription without the slightest doubt. It is also clear that an epitaph found in a pagan necropolis, invoking pagan deities, and without any Jewish symbols or biblical names, is not Jewish. The problem is, however, that there are so many instances which are far less clearcut than those just mentioned. What are we to think, for example, of an epitaph found in a Jewish catacomb, beginning with *D(is) M(anibus)* (= to the gods of the netherworld), mentioning pagan theophoric proper names, showing no Jewish symbols, and having no references to the Bible or the synagogue? Or what should we make of an epitaph, found *not* in a Jewish burial place and showing no Jewish symbols, but mentioning names like Isaac and Sabbatis and quoting the Septuagint? Or an epitaph with Jewish names and a menorah but also a cross?

In the Introduction to the *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, Victor Tcherikover formulated the following criteria for regarding a papyrus as Jewish.³⁷ A papyrus

36 See, e.g., my *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs* 16–18; R.S. Kraemer, 'Jewish Tuna and Christian Fish: Identifying Religious Affiliation in Epigraphic Sources,' *HTR* 84 (1991) 141–162; A. Bij de Vaate & J.W. van Henten, 'Jewish or Non-Jewish? Some Remarks on the Identification of Jewish Inscriptions of Asia Minor,' *BiOr* 53 (1996) 16–28; Ameling, *IJO* 11, 8–21; M.H. Williams, *Jews in a Graeco-Roman Environment* (WUNT 312; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 231–236.

37 *CPJ* I, xvii–xx.

is considered as Jewish (*a*) if the word *Ioudaios* or *Hebraios* occurs in it; (*b*) if technical terms like 'synagogue' or 'sabbath' appear in it; (*c*) if it originates from what are known to have been places of exclusively Jewish settlement; (*d*) if it contains Jewish names. In my opinion, when *taken together*, these four criteria establish a solid case for regarding a papyrus or an inscription as Jewish. Tcherikover, however, considers them to be valid indicators of Jewishness *also when taken in isolation*. I am convinced that this is an untenable position for the following reasons. (*a*) The words *Ioudaios* or *Hebraios* (or their Latin equivalents) make an epitaph Jewish *only* if said of the deceased or honoured person(s) or the dedicator(s), but *not*, for example, when a 5th or 6th century inscription found in the local church of the island Icaria says that "it is impossible that one will ever hear the truth from Jews of Icaria" (IJO II 5a), or when an inscription states that the man or woman who set up the stone forbids pagans, Jews, and Christians to efface the inscription on it (see, for example, IJO I Dal3). (*b*) Technical terms are indicative of Jewishness *only* if they are exclusively Jewish. This is not the case, for example, with the term *synagôgê* (it can mean any meeting or assembly of non-Jews as well) and with several other 'Jewish' *termini technici* (for instance, *archisynagôgos*). This criterion applies with greater force only when taken *in combination with other criteria*. (*c*) Exclusively Jewish places are very rare, especially in the diaspora, except for the Jewish catacombs in Rome. But even there it is not impossible that, after these burial places ceased to be used by Jews, pagans or Christians deposited the bodies of some of their deceased in these catacombs. (*d*) Finally the criterion of Jewish names. Are there exclusively Jewish names? Actually, there are very few names (if any) "which can be demonstrated to have been used *only* by Jews, and never by Christians or pagans, whether in the same or other geographic areas."³⁸ Highly instructive in this respect is the name Sabbath (and its variants) of which Menahem Stern has proved beyond any reasonable doubt that, whereas in the Hellenistic period it was by and large a typically Jewish name (as a hellenized form of the Hebrew Shabbetai), in the Roman and Byzantine periods a great many non-Jews adopted it without being aware of its original

38 R.S. Kraemer, 'Hellenistic Jewish Women: The Epigraphical Evidence,' *SBL 1986 Seminar Papers* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 191. J. Oehler's collection of Jewish inscriptions in his 'Epigraphische Beiträge zur Geschichte des Judentums,' *MGWJ* 53 (1909), 292–302, 443–452, 525–538, is marred by his inclusion of many inscriptions on the basis of names supposed to be exclusively Jewish. On Greek transcriptions of Jewish names see B.H. McLean, *An Introduction to Greek Epigraphy of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods from Alexander the Great down to the Reign of Constantine* (323 B.C.–A.D. 337) (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002), 90–92.

connotations.³⁹ And, it should be added here, Jewish symbols are not an absolute guarantee for Jewishness either because these could be—and were—used also by Jewish Christians and even by some gentile Christians.⁴⁰

In his edition of the Jewish inscriptions of Asia Minor, Walter Ameling lists five criteria which identify an inscription certainly as Jewish:⁴¹ (i) The identification of a person as *Ioudaios*; Ameling rightly rejects the geographical (person from Judaea) and the onomastic (*Ioudaios* as proper name) interpretation. (ii) Mention of Jewish *realia*, such as Jewish feasts, their Holy Scriptures, synagogues, etc. Here, however, one should not rule out the possibility that Jewish-Christian groups could refer to the same *realia*. (iii) Provenance from unquestionably Jewish buildings such as synagogues or exclusively Jewish catacombs (such as Beth She‘arim). (iv) Occurrence of Jewish symbols such as *menorah*, *lulav*, *ethrog*, *shofar* etc. Ameling does concede, however, that sometimes Christians used some of these symbols as well. (v) The use of Hebrew, which was the sacred language of none but the Jews. As we see, two of these criteria are less than 100 % certain indicators of Jewishness,⁴² so they might perhaps better have been included in the following list, where Ameling mentions four additional criteria of a more disputed nature. (vi) Proper names are a hard-to-use criterion, as is the designation ‘Godfearers’ (*theosebeis*, which can also mean ‘pious ones’).⁴³ Ameling also rightly rejects the inclusion of worshippers of the *Theos Hypsistos*, however great the Jewish influence may have been in this case.⁴⁴ (vii) Biblical and post-biblical Jewish expressions which may also have been

39 M. Stern in *CPJ* III (1964) 43–56.

40 See e.g. E.R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* II (New York: Pantheon, 1953) 13; idem, ‘An Early Christian Bread Stamp,’ *HTR* 57 (1964) 133–137 (137: “at least some Christians, probably many, carried over strictly Jewish symbols into their new faith”). For the use of ‘Christian’ symbols by Jews see P. Figueras, *Decorated Jewish Ossuaries* (Leiden: Brill, 1983), 17 and 22–23.

41 *IJO* II, 8–21.

42 Ameling calls them ‘zweifelsfrei’ (13), but that is an overstatement.

43 But one might of course ask: why include Godfearers when they were not Jews but just pagan sympathizers with Judaism?

44 A catalogue of the inscriptions pertaining to the cult of *Theos Hypsistos* can be found in S. Mitchell, ‘The Cult of *Theos Hypsistos* Between Pagans, Jews, and Christians,’ in P. Athanassiadi & M. Frede (eds.), *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 81–148, esp. 128–147; and in idem, ‘Further Thoughts on the Cult of *Theos Hypsistos*,’ in S. Mitchell & P. van Nuffelen (eds.), *One God: Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 167–208. See now also A. Collar, *Religious Networks in the Roman Empire: The Spread of New Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 224–286.

used by non-Jews. (viii) Magical formulae, which often contain many Jewish elements but need not be of Jewish origin for that reason. Finally (ix) the few Samaritan inscriptions, non-Jewish *stricto sensu*, but fortunately included by Ameling.⁴⁵ He is aware, however, of the fact that, whatever criteria we use, it is inevitable that we overlook Jewish inscriptions that cannot be identified as such for the simple reason that they are not distinguished in any way from non-Jewish inscriptions.⁴⁶

Margaret Williams adds the important observation that, even though without further corroborative evidence personal names usually cannot prove the Jewishness of an inscription, it is significant that Jews prefer the undeclined or undeclinable form of personal names (as in the LXX) while Christians prefer the declinable. So, for instance, “while the Christians almost always use the declined form Jakobos, undeclined Jakô is the form we find in the Jewish community.”⁴⁷

It may be clear by now that the matter is far from being simple.⁴⁸ A rigorous application of criteria would require us to regard an inscription as Jewish only when a number of criteria reinforce one another, e.g., a Jewish burial place plus typically Jewish symbols and epithets (for instance, *philentolos*, ‘lover of the commandments’), or biblical names plus Jewish technical terms and functions (for instance, *archisynagôgos*, ‘head of the synagogue’). The only case in which no more than one criterion suffices to establish the Jewishness of an inscription is the use of Hebrew since only Jews made use of that language in

45 In 1996 J.W. van Henten and A. Bij de Vaate tried to formulate a minimum of reliable criteria for distinguishing a Jewish from a non-Jewish inscription. However, their exercise results in no more than the (in itself correct) conclusion that “extreme caution in determining a Jewish origin for an inscription on the basis of certain technical terminology only” is required. See Bij de Vaate and van Henten, ‘Jewish or Non-Jewish?’ 16–28.

46 See W. Ameling, ‘Die jüdische Diaspora Kleinasiens und der ‘epigraphic habit’, in J. Frey, D. Schwartz, S. Gripentrog (eds.), *Jewish Identity in the Greco-Roman World* (AJEC 71; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 266 (253–282).

47 Williams, ‘The Jewish Community of Corycus: Two More Inscriptions,’ in her *Jews in a Graeco-Roman Environment* 234–235.

48 See Price and Misgav, ‘Jewish Inscriptions and Their Use’ 461: ‘Despite 150 years of scholarship on Jewish epigraphy, no firm criteria have been developed—or are likely to be developed—to distinguish Jewish inscriptions from others.’ This pessimistic point of view leads them to the conclusion that ‘the use of Jewish epigraphy to study such questions as cultural and social assimilation is *a priori* defective and misleading.’ This may well be too somber.

antiquity.⁴⁹ In all other cases more than one criterion is required. Even the use of the *menorah* as a decoration is not sufficient evidence since there are several examples of Christian inscriptions with a *menorah* as decoration.⁵⁰ With such methodological strictness one runs the risk of excluding valuable material the Jewishness of which is not manifest enough. On the other hand, methodological slackness runs the risk of including non-Jewish material that may blur or distort the picture. It is better, for the sake of clarity, to keep on the strict side, without being overly rigorous. That is to say, application of two or three criteria together is to be much preferred to applying only one, the more so since in late antiquity Judaism, Christianity, and paganism were not always mutually exclusive categories.

4 Genres

By far the majority of our evidence consists of epitaphs (some 75–80%),⁵¹ but there are also other genres of epigraphic material.⁵² Firstly, there are honorific inscriptions, i.e., decrees passed by an official institution (in our case mostly a synagogal community) in which persons are honoured who aided financially or treated a Jewish community kindly in other ways.⁵³ Further there are legal texts, mainly in the form of Jewish manumission inscriptions that legally

49 Samaritans, too, used Hebrew but theirs is in a different script.

50 See Kant, 'Jewish Inscriptions in Greek and Latin' 685. In recent excavations in Sagalassos (Turkey) an oil lamp was discovered with a *menorah* on top and a cross at the bottom (not yet published); the leader of the excavation (Marc Waelkens) classes it as Christian (oral communication), but that is in fact quite uncertain. For an inscription with both a Chi-Rho (Christ monogram) and a *menorah* see *CIJ* 84*. For a Christian sarcophagus with a *menorah* see *CIJ* 693b.

51 See my *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs*.

52 See Kant, 'Jewish Inscriptions in Greek and Latin' 675–681.

53 Although outdated, still the best collection is by B. Lifshitz, *Donateurs et fondateurs dans les synagogues juives* (Paris: Gabalda, 1967). The competition in striving after honour that is so characteristic of Graeco-Roman honorific epigraphy here clearly influenced the Jews. Ameling, 'Die jüdische Diaspora Kleinasiens' 272, remarks: "Der agonistische Geist war vielleicht gemildert, aber sicher anwesend." And Tessa Rajak says in this context, 'we need not be wholly surprised to find practice diverging from principle [sc., not to seek honour]', in 'Benefactors in the Greco-Jewish Diaspora,' in her *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome* (AGAJU 48; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 374. But later on she adds that the Jewish evidence 'is very far from the verbose world of pagan epigraphic benefaction and honour' (380).

formalize the freedom of slaves—we have quite a few instances from both Delphi and the Bosporan Kingdom.⁵⁴ Moreover we have lists of persons, both Jewish and non-Jewish, who have contributed to the realization of a Jewish building or another project (e.g., a cemetery), such as the famous donor inscription from Aphrodisias that we will come back to shortly.⁵⁵ Although it cannot be dealt with here at any length, it should be stressed nonetheless that all these epigraphic genres owe their origin to the heavy influence of Greek models.

5 Languages

Now some brief remarks about the languages used in the inscriptions are in order. The first thing that strikes us is the heavy preponderance of Greek.⁵⁶ In the diaspora some 85 % of the evidence is in Greek and in Palestine the percentage is no less than some 60 to 65 %. Only a quarter—or, for Israel, one third—is in Latin, Hebrew, Aramaic, and other languages. But there are significant local variations. For instance, we find that of the about 600 inscriptions from the Jewish catacombs in Rome 78 % are in Greek, whereas only 21 % are in Latin and 1 % are in Hebrew or Aramaic. And there are also considerable differences in the use of the three languages in the three greatest catacombs (out of seven) in Rome: the Via Appia or Vigna Randanini catacomb (the most Romanized of all) has ca. 65 % Greek inscriptions, 23 % in Latin, 12 % are bilinguals; the Via Nomentana or Villa Torlonia catacomb has 99 % in Greek, 0 % in Latin and 1 % is bilingual; and the Monteverde catacomb has ca. 79 % in Greek, 13 % in Latin, 1,5 % in Hebrew/ Aramaic, and 6,5 % bilinguals (Greek/Latin; Greek/Hebrew; Greek/Aramaic).⁵⁷ This is not the place to investigate the background of these differences between the three catacombs; what I do want to draw attention to, however, is the degree of linguistic hellenization of the Jews, even in a predominantly Latin-speaking city such as Rome. Greek had become the *lingua franca* of the Jews all over the Mediterranean world and the inscriptions testify most

54 See, e.g., Gibson, *The Jewish Manumission Inscriptions of the Bosporus Kingdom*.

55 See J. Reynolds & R. Tannenbaum, *Jews and Godfearers at Aphrodisias* (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1987).

56 In Appendix 2 to this book I will briefly deal with some of the peculiarities of the Greek in these Jewish inscriptions.

57 See Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome* 77, as corrected by L.V. Rutgers, *The Jews of Late Ancient Rome* (RGRW 126; Leiden: Brill, 1995) 176–178. The percentages in the text above have been slightly rounded off.

clearly to that.⁵⁸ In Asia Minor, for instance, the total of Jewish inscriptions in Greek is above 95 %. Of Hebrew and Aramaic we find only some superficial traces such as the word *shalom*. One should not assume that they used Greek only on their tombstones as a kind of sacred language (comparable to the use of Latin in later Christian funerary epigraphy in the West), for their sacred language remained Hebrew, as is witnessed by the many Greek and Latin inscriptions ending in the single Hebrew word *shalom*, or expressions such as *shalom 'al mishkavo* (peace be upon his resting place) and *shalom 'al Yisra'el* (peace be upon Israel).

6 Greek in Jewish Palestine

This brings us to another, much debated matter, the language situation, and especially the role of Greek, in Jewish Palestine in the light of epigraphy.⁵⁹ When we try to establish the percentage of Greek inscriptions in the Jewish evidence, we find that of Frey's 530 inscriptions from Israel, 315 are in Greek (several of them in fact being bilingual);⁶⁰ which is about 60 %. In addition to that, of the 43 inscriptions from the cemetery of Dominus Flevit in Jerusalem 12 are in Greek; which is 29 %. In the catacombs of Beth She'arim, however, of the 246 epitaphs no less than 218 are in Greek; which is 88 %. Of the 32 tomb inscriptions of the Goliath family in Jericho 17 are in Greek, which is 53 %. And of the 240 inscribed ossuaries in the collection of Rahmani 87 are in Greek (16 of which are bilingual); which is 37 %.⁶¹ These percentages vary widely, from

58 It has to be kept in mind that in Rome there are 17 Latin inscriptions written in Greek characters and also three Greek inscriptions written in Latin characters.

59 See my 'Greek in Jewish Palestine in the Light of Epigraphy,' J.J. Collins & G.E. Sterling (eds.), *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 154–174; reprinted in my *Japheth in the Tents of Shem: Studies on Jewish Hellenism in Antiquity* (CEBT 32; Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 9–26. There one will also find references to the older scholarly literature. The pioneer was S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine: Studies in the Life and Manners of Jewish Palestine in the II–IV Centuries C.E.* (New York: Philipp Feldheim, 1965). See also M.A. Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 122–165.

60 In 1974, Mussies counted 440 Jewish inscriptions in Greek in Palestine on the basis of CIJ and SEG; see G. Mussies, 'Greek in Palestine and the Diaspora,' in S. Safrai & M. Stern (eds.), *The Jewish People in the First Century 2* (CRINT 1 2; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1976), 1042.

61 Roth-Gerson's book is left out of account here since it contains purposefully only Greek inscriptions.

29 to 88% (and we will have to come back to that), but the overall average of Greek inscriptions is slightly more than 53%.⁶²

It is hard to predict how this will compare to the average in the provisional database of the *CIP*. The percentage of Greek inscriptions in this comprehensive collection cannot yet be established with certainty, but a provisional estimate is that at least half of the Jewish inscriptions are in Greek (or have some Greek writing on them in the considerable number which are bilingual, containing both Greek and Hebrew or Aramaic).⁶³ If for the sake of convenience we round this off to some 55–60%, we see something very significant. This is not only very close to the average of 53% that we have just arrived at, but it is also consonant with the 60% of Greek inscriptions in the old collection of Frey. So even though in the past 80 years⁶⁴ the material has more than tripled, the numerical ratio of Greek and non-Greek material has not changed at all! And that is a striking and important observation.

If at least half of the Palestinian Jewish epigraphic material from the period between Alexander and Muhammad is in Greek, what does that tell us? Can we readily draw the conclusion that for at least half of the Jewish people in their homeland their native language was Greek, not Aramaic?⁶⁵ That would be an

62 I do not know on the basis of what data Lee Levine can state that “the overall percentage of Greek inscriptions in Roman-Byzantine Palestine jumps to over 55 percent;” see L.I. Levine, *Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity: Conflict or Confluence* (Seattle—London: University of Washington Press, 1998), 180, but he is certainly very close to the truth. For if we would add to these statistics the fact that in the still unpublished collection of 30 ossuaries from Scythopolis all of them contain only Greek inscriptions, the average percentage indeed “jumps to over 55 percent”!

63 Interestingly enough, Latin makes no appearance in the Jewish inscriptions from Palestine. Cf. the remark by H.B. Rosén: “Das Lateinische konnte sich den palästinischen Sprachen nicht als Prestigesprache gegenüberstellen, nicht nur weil es in Palästina auf ein bereits fest verankertes und eingewurzeltes Griechisch gestoßen ist, sondern wohl eher deshalb, weil dieses Griechisch Träger einer spezifischen Landes- und Nationalkultur war, die man heute jüdischen Hellenismus nennt, und weil die Sprachen Palästinas Ausdrucksmittel einer mehr als tausendjährigen Literatur waren, welche der lateinischen weder an geistigem Prestige noch an Verwurzelung im Volke in irgendeiner Weise nachstand” (in ‘Die Sprachsituation im römischen Palästina,’ in his *East and West: Selected Writings in Linguistics*, vol. 1 (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1982), 489; cf. *ibid.* 493–494).

64 Even though *CIP* II was published only in 1952, Frey’s volume reflects the ‘Stand der Forschung’ of the early thirties of the previous century. Frey died in 1940.

65 On Aramaic as the principal spoken language of Palestine see E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, vol. II (Edinburgh: Clark, 1979), 20–28 (with bibliography). For a similar discussion about the choice of language for Jewish epitaphs

overhasty conclusion, for we first have to address the question of the representativeness of this material. Can we say, for instance, with Lee Levine, on the basis of the fact that some 37 % of the Jerusalem ossuaries are in Greek, that “we can *safely* [italics added] set this number as the minimum percentage of those inhabitants in the city who preferred Greek”?⁶⁶ Can we follow Martin Hengel who, on the basis of almost 40 % Greek ossuary inscriptions in Jerusalem concludes as follows: “Auch wenn man davon ausgeht, daß Ossuarinschriften überwiegend von Gliedern der Mittel- und Oberschicht stammen, so darf man doch annehmen, daß ca. 10–15 % der damaligen Bewohner Jerusalems als Muttersprache Griechisch sprachen”?⁶⁷ Should we agree with Baruch Lifshitz, who confidently states: “La proportion des textes épigraphiques grecs par rapport à la quantité des inscriptions découvertes à Jérusalem témoigne de l’emploi de la langue grecque par une partie assez considérable de la population de la ville”?⁶⁸ These are very difficult questions, the more so if we take seriously Josephus’ somewhat enigmatic remark, “Our people do not favour those who have mastered the languages of many nations” (*Ant.* 20: 264).⁶⁹

7 Representativeness

Demographers of the ancient world constantly have to struggle with the problem of the scarcity and the questionable representativeness of the sources. To give an example: Of the various classes into which ancient Greek and Latin inscriptions fall, by far the largest numerically is that of epitaphs. In many tens of thousands of these inscriptions the age at death is mentioned. But, as a

in Italy see D. Noy, ‘Writing in Tongues: The Use of Greek, Latin and Hebrew in Jewish Inscriptions from Roman Italy,’ *JJS* 48 (1997) 300–311; and cf. L.V. Rutgers, *The Jews in Late Ancient Rome. Evidence of Cultural Interaction in the Roman Diaspora* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 176–209.

66 Levine, *Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity* 76.

67 Hengel, ‘Der vorchristliche Paulus’ in M. Hengel & U. Heckel (edd.), *Paulus und das antike Judentum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), 257–258. In ‘Jerusalem als jüdische und hellenistische Stadt,’ in his *Judaica, hellenistica et christiana: Kleine Schriften II* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 147, Hengel speaks of 10–20 %.

68 Lifshitz in ‘Jérusalem sous la domination romaine,’ *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II 8 (New York—Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1977), 459. Cf. also M. Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture: Fusion and Diffusion* (New York—London: Columbia University Press, 1959), 36: “The most forceful evidence that Greek had become the vernacular comes from epigraphy.”

69 See T. Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society* (London: Duckworth, 1983), 46–50.

specialist in the epigraphy and demography of the Roman Empire has calculated,⁷⁰ even so we only know the age at death of ca. 0,015 % of all people in the first 5 centuries of the Empire. (He made the calculation on the basis of the assumption that in 500 years there are approximately 16 generations, each of which on average counted some 20 million people; this total of some 320 million divided by the total number of inscriptions with age indication yields 0,015 %). Even if these numbers needed to be substantially corrected, the overall picture would hardly change. We will always remain far below 1 % of the total population. This fact raises the serious problem of how representative this less than 1 % is for the population of the Empire as a whole.⁷¹ As a matter of fact it completely depends upon whether or not we are able to take into account the possibly distorting factors in the data at our disposal. There are distorting factors, although to what extent they really distort our picture is a matter of ongoing debate. Let us review here only the most important of them and try to find out how these factors may have influenced our Jewish material from Palestine.

To begin with, we have to keep in mind that the epigraphical situation in the catacombs of Beth She'arim with its almost 90 % of Greek inscriptions distorts the picture. Beth She'arim was an international site in antiquity. Many people from abroad were buried there and these people brought their epigraphic habits (including the Greek language) with them so that the linguistic map of the caves does not reflect the regional one.⁷² The same applies, although to a lesser degree, to the Jaffa burial caves.⁷³ These did serve the local population, but that population included substantial immigrant communities from Greek-speaking regions in Egypt and Asia Minor, people again bringing their epigraphic habits with them.⁷⁴ So it is somewhat risky to include the high

70 M. Clauss, 'Probleme der Lebensalterstatistiken aufgrund römischer Grabinschriften,' *Chiron* 3 (1973) 395–417, here 411.

71 See, e.g., R. MacMullen, 'The Epigraphic Habit in the Roman Empire,' *American Journal of Philology* 103 (1982) 233–246.

72 See T. Rajak, 'The Rabbinic Dead and the Diaspora Dead at Beth She'arim,' in her *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome* (AGAJU 48; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 479–499. The term 'epigraphic habit' was introduced by R. MacMullen, 'The Epigraphic Habit in the Roman Empire,' (see the previous note); it is mostly used to describe the considerable increase in the practice of inscribing on stone in the Roman Empire during the first three centuries CE, esp. in the second century CE. See also E.A. Meyer, 'Explaining the Epigraphic Habit in the Roman Empire: The Evidence of Epitaphs,' *JRS* 80 (1990) 74–96.

73 The inscriptions from Jaffa will be published in vol. 3 of *CIIP*, which is expected to appear in 2014.

74 See J.J. Price, 'The Necropolis of Jaffa and Its Relation to Beth She'arim,' in B. Isaac & Y. Shahar (eds.), *Judaea-Palaestina, Babylon and Rome: Jews in Antiquity* (TSAJ 147; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 11–24.

percentage of Greek in these two burial sites into a calculation of the average of Greek in the inscriptions of the country.

Secondly, although it is certainly true that the only area in which the influence of Hellenistic culture upon the Jewish people can be more or less quantified is the realm of epigraphy,⁷⁵ we have to ask ourselves what is the statistical status of our data. When we look at the number of inscriptions as compared to the number of Jews in our period, we have to concede that it is indeed only of an extremely tiny minority that we have their epitaphs or honorary inscriptions. If we take our period, spanning almost a thousand years, to have comprised about 33 generations (30 years for one generation, for the sake of convenience), and if we take a generation as averaging 1 million Jews (in Palestine only, that is),⁷⁶ then we have some 1000 inscriptions for 33 million Jews: that is to say, one inscription for every 33,000 Jews. Even if the average number of Jews per generation would have to be further reduced or if we were to take the ca. 2000 inscriptions of the *CIIP* project as our basis, we would not even reach 0,025 %. From a statistical point of view that is a hopeless situation, for what can we say about the 99,975 % other Jews whose tombstones or honorary inscriptions have not been preserved, if ever they had one? To put it another way: Is it possible that the Greek inscriptions belong only to a very tiny upper class of less than 1 % of the Jews whereas the vast majority of the people would never phrase their inscriptions in Greek? This is an extremely improbable suggestion, it would seem to me, and that for the following reasons.

Many Jews were definitely too poor to erect tombstones inscribed with epitaphs. 'Inscriptions on stone, even small ones, are expensive, and therefore

gen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 215–226. At p. 226 Price states: "There are many more Jews of Egyptian origin buried in Jaffa than in any place outside Egypt." For references see also F. Avemarie, 'Jüdische Diasporagemeinden in der Antike: Ihr Selbstverständnis im Spiegel der Inschriften,' in H.J. Körtner (ed.), *Kirche—Christus—Kerygma: Profil und Identität evangelischer Kirche(n)* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 2009), 21–61; reprinted in his *Neues Testament und früh rabbinisches Judentum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), here 73 note 154.

75 Thus Levine, *Judaism and Hellenism* 180.

76 To be sure, this number is an estimate and also 2 million or half a million could be a reasonable estimate, but for the present purposes that hardly makes a difference. In the scholarly literature on the subject the estimates vary from half a million to 5 million; see the surveys in A. Byatt, 'Josephus and Population Numbers in First Century Palestine,' *PEQ* 105 (1973) 51–60, and G. Stemmerger, 'Juden,' *RAC* 19 (2001) 172. By assuming a Jewish population of 1 million we keep on the safe side; so does R.H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times* (New York: Harper, 1949), 189.

the humbler members of society had no money to spend on them.⁷⁷ But that does not necessarily imply that the inscribed stones we do have derive only from the upper classes. There is evidence that the epitaphs in Greek represent wider strata of the population.⁷⁸ There is a great difference between a metrical epitaph in Homeric hexameters engraved upon a luxurious and expensive marble sarcophagus with elaborate decorations on the one hand and poorly scratched names on potsherds or wall-plaster that marked the graves of the deceased on the other (and we have many of the latter sort). The former is a manifestation of wealth and status; the latter is usually the contrary (though not necessarily so). To be sure, “the desire to emulate Graeco-Roman mores (and the means to do so) was far more pronounced among the upper than the lower social strata,”⁷⁹ but there are numerous very simple and poorly executed tombstones with inscriptions in poor Greek that undeniably stem from these lower strata of Jewish society. The persons who had their tombstones in Beth She‘arim inscribed with Greek epitaphs include not only rabbis and public officers but also merchants and craftsmen.⁸⁰ Lieberman already wrote that “the very poverty and vulgarity of the language of these inscriptions shows that it was spoken by the people and not written by learned men only.”⁸¹ As to the

77 W. Ameling, “The Epigraphic Habit and the Jewish Diasporas of Asia Minor and Syria,” in H.M. Cotton, R.G. Hoyland, J.J. Price & D.J. Wasserstein (eds.), *From Hellenism to Islam: Cultural and Linguistic Change in the Roman Near East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 205 (203–234).

78 See J. Barr, “Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, ed. W.D. Davies & L. Finkelstein, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1989), 102 with n. 4. The same applies to the Jewish epitaphs of Rome; see H.J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995; repr. of the 1960 ed.), 75–92. Feldman’s theory that so many ossuaries have inscriptions in Greek only to prevent non-Jews from molesting the graves is absolutely not convincing; see L.H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interaction from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 14 and 22 (the whole first chapter of this book, pp. 3–44, is directed against Martin Hengel c.s.).

79 Levine, *Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity* 24.

80 See R. Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology in the Land of Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 103.

81 S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Feldheim, 1965), 30. See also the conclusion of J.N. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek? How Much Greek Could the First Jewish Christians Have Known?* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 183. A comparable instance of that category is the motley mixture of graffiti in the necropolis of Maresha/Marissa, which were definitely scratched there by common people, for the Greek is vulgar and has numerous orthographic errors, but it is Greek these people (partly Idumaeans, partly Phoenicians)

many synagogue inscriptions in Greek collected by Lea Roth-Gerson,⁸² there can be little doubt that most of them were meant to be read by the regular visitors of these buildings, that is, the common people who were members of the local community, who were supposed to be able to make sense of them. And probably they were. As Goodenough remarked: "The Jews who went to the synagogues (...) admired the Aramaic or Hebrew but read the Greek."⁸³ In this connection it is telling that of the 609 papyri from the Roman Near East in general found outside Egypt—the *vast* majority of which are from Roman and Byzantine Palestine—some 325 are in Greek: that is almost 55 %!⁸⁴

How far have we come? I am inclined to put it this way: The burden of the proof is on the shoulders of those scholars who want to maintain that Greek was not the *lingua franca* of many Palestinian Jews in the Hellenistic-Roman-Byzantine period in view of the fact that more than 50 % of the inscriptions are in 'the language of Japheth.' The minimalist interpretations that have been put forward by several scholars have turned out to be unconvincing. It is on the basis of the sketched evidence that as early as 1965 the great Jewish epigrapher Baruch Lifshitz was able to conclude: "The Greek language and Greek culture had penetrated all the Jewish communities of the Greek East."⁸⁵ Lifshitz is probably by and large right, but his statement should be qualified by adding that this does not imply that a majority, or even a large minority, of Jews were monolingual Greek-speakers. For most, or at least many, of the Jews in Palestine, Greek most probably remained a second language, certainly outside the urban areas.⁸⁶ We may tentatively conclude that Roman Palestine was a largely bilingual, or even trilingual, society⁸⁷—alongside the vernacular Aramaic (and,

wrote. See SEG VIII 247–261 and SEG XLII 1439–1454, with Rosén, 'Sprachsituation' 504, and Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek?* 112–113.

82 See her book mentioned above in the text. More than one third of the synagogue inscriptions from Israel are in Greek.

83 E.R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, vol. II (New York: Pantheon Books, 1954), 123.

84 Based on H.M. Cotton, W.E.H. Cockle & F.G.B. Millar, 'The Papyrology of the Roman Near East,' *JRS* 85 (1995) 214–235.

85 'L'hellénisation des Juifs en Palestine,' *RB* 72 (1965) 520–538, quote at 538. Cf. also his 'Du nouveau sur l'hellénisation des Juifs de Palestine,' *Euphrosyne* n.s. 3 (1970) 113–133. Cf. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine* 39: "We have seen how deeply Greek penetrated into all the classes of Jewish society of Palestine."

86 Thus also Mussies, 'Greek' 1058. Cf. Fitzmyer, 'The Languages of Palestine in the First Century A.D.' in his *A Wandering Aramean. Collected Aramaic Essays* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979), 46.

87 See B. Spolsky, 'Jewish Multilingualism in the First Century: An Essay in Historical Sociolinguistics,' in J.A. Fishman (ed.), *Readings in the Sociology of Jewish Languages*

to a much lesser extent, Hebrew), Greek was widely used and understood—but we have to add that the degree of use and understanding of the Greek language probably varied strongly according to locality and period, social status and educational background, occasion and mobility.⁸⁸

8 Uneven Geographical Distribution

As was mentioned above, from Rome we have some 600 inscriptions (see *JLWE* 11), but it should be emphasized that this number is exceptional. From no other city, or even country (except ancient Palestine), do we have so many Jewish inscriptions. One of the problems of the study of early Jewish epigraphy is the very uneven distribution of the evidence. For the whole of Asia Minor, for instance, including all major cities there, we have no more than some 250 inscriptions. And even more telling is it when we compare Rome to another major metropolis of the ancient world, sc. Alexandria. We know from several sources that Alexandria had for more than four centuries the largest Jewish urban population of the Hellenistic and Roman world, definitely larger than that of Rome. From Rome we have some 600 inscriptions, but from Alexandria we have no more than 20. And this disproportionate situation is typical for the field of research as a whole. This situation is due to the vicissitudes of history and to the arbitrariness of archaeological discoveries. A couple of new finds could completely change the whole picture. (Imagine the discovery of a huge Jewish necropolis in ancient Alexandria with thousands of epitaphs! The recent discovery of the great Jewish donor inscription in Aphrodisias [about which more later] was one of such surprise finds which changed the picture of

(Leiden: Brill, 1985), 35–51, esp. 40–41 where trilingualism ('triglossia') is stressed. See also Ch. Rabin, 'Hebrew and Aramaic in the First Century,' in S. Safrai & M. Stern (edd.), *The Jewish People in the First Century* 2 (CRINT 1 2; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1976), 1007–1039. But cf. R. Schmitt, 'Die Sprachverhältnisse in den östlichen Provinzen des Römischen Reiches,' *ANRW* 11 29, 2 (Berlin—New York: W. de Gruyter, 1983), 554–586, here 576: "Man wird die Sprachgemeinschaft dieses Landes mit gutem Recht als bilingual bezeichnen dürfen."

88 See G.H.R. Horsley, *New Documents* v, 19, though he says that this consensus view is 'an uneasy one.' I emphasize that in my essay "Greek in Jewish Palestine in the Light of Epigraphy" I also take into account other factors such as Jewish literature in Greek written in Palestine. For a short survey of Palestinian Graeco-Jewish writings see S.E. Porter, 'Jesus and the Use of Greek in Galilee,' in B. Chilton & C.A. Evans (eds.), *Studying the Historical Jesus* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 139–142.

ancient Judaism considerably.⁸⁹) This situation is at the same time frustrating and challenging.

9 Jerusalem and Caesarea

Talking about cities, it is interesting to see what the recent inscription corpora of two major cities in Israel reveal, sc. of Jerusalem and Caesarea Maritima (vols. 1 and 2 in the *CIIP*). Here the epigraphic material clearly confirms what we know about these cities from the literary sources. The first part of the *CIIP*-volume on Jerusalem covers the evidence—Jewish and non-Jewish—from the Hellenistic and early Roman period up till 70 CE; the second part covers the period from the year 70 to the 7th century. Most of the evidence of the first, pre-70 part is Jewish. There are some 700 inscriptions, in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Latin, and bilinguals (always Greek plus Hebrew or Aramaic). Almost 600 of them are funerary inscriptions. Of these inscriptions, 415 are in Hebrew and/or Aramaic (59%), 239 are in Greek (34%), 45 are bilingual (6.4%), and 4 are in Latin (0.6%). If one adds the bilingual inscriptions to the ones in Greek, the Greek material rises to an impressive 40% (but that is still much less than in the rest of the country). Even though this relatively high percentage of Greek may be taken as a sign of a considerable degree of hellenization, there cannot be the slightest doubt that here we have the epigraphic record of the most Jewish city of the ancient world. This picture changes completely, however, once we take a look at the second part of volume 1, the one with the post-70 material. As was to be expected, it is strikingly different from the first part. Whereas in the volume covering pre-70 Jerusalem the vast majority of the material (more than 90%) is Jewish, in this volume on the post-70 period the number of Jewish inscriptions is painfully small. As if to mark the contrast, the volume opens with an inscription with a dedication to the Graeco-Egyptian god Sarapis (no. 705). The book contains almost 500 inscriptions. These are helpfully divided into two parts, those from 70 to ca. 325 CE, when Constantine began to christianize the city, and those from Constantine to the Muslim conquest. The first period yields 79 inscriptions: *only one* Jewish inscription (no. 752, a graffito partly in Hebrew or Aramaic, partly in Greek); 78 pagan inscriptions in Latin (55) and Greek (23); but no Christian inscriptions. The second period (325–7th cent.)

89 See J. Reynolds—R. Tannenbaum, *Jews and Godfearers at Aphrodisias* (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1987); with my comments in: 'Jews and Christians in Aphrodisias in the Light of their Relations in Other Cities of Asia Minor,' in my *Essays on the Jewish World of Early Christianity* 166–181.

yields some 420 inscriptions: 11 Jewish in Hebrew or Aramaic; only 7 or 8 pagan in Greek and Latin; some 375 Christian in Greek (ca. 350), Latin (6), Armenian (17), and Georgian (1); finally some 30, all in Greek, are of uncertain religious affiliation (some of these numbers are rounded off because of several margins of uncertainty). Here we can see clearly how the epigraphical record reflects the tumultuous history of the city: first it was a Jewish, then a pagan, and finally a Christian city. The difference with the epigraphic record of Caesarea Maritima is striking. That city, although founded by the Jewish king Herod,⁹⁰ was a predominantly pagan city right from the start, but from the 3rd century onwards it gradually but slowly developed into a major Christian center. The volume (*CIIP* 11) contains 980 inscriptions from this city, less than 2% of which is Jewish. Most of the material consists of pagan Greek and Latin inscriptions, somewhat less is the Christian material, and there are only a handful of Jewish (and Samaritan) inscriptions. This volume makes impressively clear the very high degree to which Caesarea was a Graeco-Roman—not a Jewish—city with the headquarters of the Roman administration at its center. The geographical distance between Jerusalem and Caesarea was (and is) not great at all, but the cultural gap between the two was enormous, and in this respect the stones speak volumes.

Quite another example in which the inscriptions show us a markedly different picture of two cities, this time in the diaspora, is the comparison between the epitaphs from Leontopolis (modern Tell el-Yehoudiyeh in the Egyptian Nile Delta, where a rival Jewish temple stood) and Venusia (modern Venosa in southern Italy) produced by David Noy.⁹¹ Let me summarize his findings. From both places we have some 75 epitaphs. The inscriptions from Leontopolis all date from the period between ca. 150 BCE and 50 CE; those from Venusia between ca. 400 and 550 CE. Those from Leontopolis are incised on limestone slabs; those from Venusia are painted or scratched on wall plaster. Those from Leontopolis are all in Greek, no exceptions; those from Venusia are in Greek and Latin, and moreover, many contain Hebrew words or phrases (*shalom* and the like) or are completely in Hebrew (and those from still later centuries are all in Hebrew only).⁹² Those from Leontopolis frequently record the age at death of

90 K.G. Holum, R.L. Hohlfelder, R.J. Bull, A. Raban, *King Herod's Dream: Caesarea on the Sea* (New York—London: Norton, 1988).

91 D. Noy, 'The Jewish Communities of Leontopolis and Venosa,' in J.W. van Henten & P.W. van der Horst (eds.), *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy* (AGAJU 21; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 162–182. The inscriptions of these two places were published by Noy himself in *JIGRE* 51–182 (nos. 29–105) and *JJWE* 1 61–149 (nos. 42–116).

92 Curiously, there is also a Greek epitaph written in Hebrew characters, *JJWE* 1 75.

the deceased, those from Venusia hardly ever. Among those from Leontopolis we find no less than 12 epitaphs in the form of Greek hexametric poems⁹³ and also typically Greek epitaphs in which the tombstone addresses the passer-by; those from Venusia have none of this. Those from Leontopolis contain, besides many regular Greek names, also many biblical or Hebrew names, but no typically Jewish symbols such as *menorah*, *lulav*, *ethrog*, etc.; those from Venusia have only a few biblical or Hebrew names but plenty of Jewish symbols. Noy concludes that the Jews of Leontopolis, at least in their practices of commemorating the dead, were Ptolemaic and Roman Egyptians first and Jews second, which is quite different from the situation in Venusia, in an Italy that was rapidly being christianized. As Noy says,

The difference may be one of place: Leontopolis was a largely or even entirely Jewish city, whereas Venosa was a mixed one in which the Jews were important but not necessarily predominant. The more significant difference could be one of time. In Egypt (or at least in Leontopolis) in the 1st century BC and AD, religious identity was perhaps not a major problem. In 5th and 6th century AD southern Italy, the 'market-place of religions' was at the height of its business, and the Jews of Venosa, however well integrated into city life they were, felt obliged to use their own trademark wherever they could.⁹⁴

10 Uneven Chronological Distribution

As we just saw, there is not only an unevenness in geographical but also an unevenness in chronological distribution of the epigraphic material. The material we are dealing with ranges in time from ca. 300 BCE to 700 CE, thus covering the first postbiblical millennium. However, the earlier centuries in this time span do not yield nearly as much evidence as the later centuries. To be more precise, there is a conspicuous concentration of material from the third to fifth centuries CE, which is striking and somewhat enigmatic since that is exactly the period in which the epigraphic habit of the Roman Empire was in decline.

93 Epitaphs in hexametric/pentametric verse are a common pagan Greek phenomenon; see for a fine anthology M. Wolfe & R.P. Martin, *Cut These Words into My Stone: Ancient Greek Epitaphs* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013). I studied (and republished) all Judaeo-Greek metrical epitaphs in my 'Jewish Poetical Tomb Inscriptions,' in van Henten & van der Horst (eds.), *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy*, 129–147.

94 Noy, 'The Jewish Communities of Leontopolis and Venosa' 182.

Aside from that unevenness, there is also the problem that it is often very difficult to assign a date to inscriptions with any precision.⁹⁵ This is a problem because actually the only really certain evidence for dating an inscription is a date in the text itself, or mention of a known person (e.g., an Emperor) or an event of known date, but there are regrettably few Jewish epitaphs which provide such data.⁹⁶ Some inscriptions can be dated more or less precisely on the basis of names, e.g. Aurelii are always later than 212 CE. And sometimes the form of the monument on which the inscription has been engraved is of some help in fixing the date more precisely.⁹⁷ But almost the only other clue remaining then is the style of the lettering or the form of the letters. However, the criterion of the character of the writing and the shapes of the individual letters is far less precise than is often supposed. It is a valuable method especially for the early period of Greek writing (seventh through fifth centuries BCE) because the various alphabets then underwent a rapid development⁹⁸ But by the end of the fifth century BCE the letters and the technique of writing them had completed this development. The classical style of the fourth century was never eclipsed and was preserved almost throughout antiquity (in spite of the introduction of a few new letter-forms in the imperial period, which do not often occur in our evidence). That is why outstanding epigraphic authorities are sometimes widely at variance on the date of an inscription as assessed by the forms of its letters. A discrepancy of two or three centuries in dating inscriptions has more than once proved possible. Only a very thorough and constantly maintained acquaintance with all possible variations in letter shapes from region to region and from period to period may sometimes enable an expert to be more precise than, say, indicating just the century in which the inscription was probably written.

The implication of all this is not only that quite often the (sometimes overly precise) dating of inscriptions by their editors is to be taken *cum grano salis*, but also that if one wants to draw conclusions from the material, one can speak

95 See for concise but good expositions A.G. Woodhead, *The Study of Greek Inscriptions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd ed. 1982), 52–66. G. Klaffenbach, *Griechische Epigraphik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), Ch. 8. For Latin see J.E. Sandys—S.G. Campbell, *Latin Epigraphy* (Groningen: Bouma's Boekhuis, repr. 1969), 200–203.

96 Only a number from Leontopolis (Tell el-Yehudieh) provide exact dates.

97 This is well illustrated by the study of the tombstones in the shape of a door by M. Waelkens, *Die kleinasiatischen Türsteine* (Mainz: Philip von Zabern, 1986).

98 See e.g. Klaffenbach, *Griechische Epigraphik*, Ch. 4; B.A. van Groningen, *Greek Palaeography* (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1967), 13–20; B.F. Cook, *Greek Inscriptions* (London: British Museum, 1987), 6–20.

only in rather general chronological terms (e.g., the Hellenistic period, the early Roman Empire, the later Roman Empire). But it would be unwise to take one's refuge to extreme skepticism here on the basis of these chronological uncertainties. After all, in many cases the dating of an inscription is irrelevant. For instance, when we see in inscriptions that Jews used tombstones with the dedication *Dis Manibus* ('to the gods of the netherworld') in Italy (*JLWE* II 604–612, all from Rome), but also elsewhere in the West; when we see that Jews scribbled prayers of thanks to God on the walls of the temple of the god Pan in El-Kanaïs (Egypt; see *JIGRE* 121 and 122); when we see that in Jewish manumission inscriptions from Delphi and the Bosphorus Jews call upon Apollo, Zeus, Gaia, and Helios (*IJO* I Ach42, BS20, BS22); when we see that a Jew in Oropos (Boeotia) tells us that the god Amphiaraios gave him an order in a dream (*IJO* I Ach45); and when we see that Jews of Leontopolis freely mention Moira as the goddess who decides their Fate (*JIGRE* 33)—when we see all this, then in spite of the wide chronological range of these testimonies, we should not shrink from arriving at the more generalizing conclusion that the Jews who commissioned these inscriptions 'had an understanding of Jewishness that differs strikingly from some modern conceptions of ancient Judaism' and that 'to some who saw themselves as Jews, accepting the presence of Graeco-Roman deities in their world, whether or not worshipped (...), was not necessarily dissonant with their identity as pious Jews.'⁹⁹ We should not exclude possibilities that at first blush would seem to be to us improbable. Let me add a personal note here. In one of my early publications in the 70s of the previous century (I forget which one¹⁰⁰) I had written that 'an ancient Jew could never have said (or done) this or that.' I received a quick reaction from the inimitable Morton Smith, who sent me a postcard with the following remark: 'Dear Pieter, *never* say that an ancient Jew could *never* have said this or that. We simply do not know!'

In the next chapter I will focus no longer on the ancient world as a whole but on a more limited area in order to see what the study of Jewish epigraphy yields in terms of our knowledge of Jewish communities there.

99 Kant, 'Jewish Inscriptions' 686.

100 It may have been my doctoral thesis on Pseudo-Phocylides of 1978.

Jewish Epigraphy and Diaspora: The Case of Asia Minor

1 Introduction

The flurry of research activity in the field of Jewish epigraphy in the last 25 years went hand in hand with a burgeoning of interest in the diaspora.¹ That is not a coincidence—on the contrary: Much of our knowledge of the Jewish diaspora in Graeco-Roman antiquity is derived not, or not so much, from literary sources but from epigraphic and other archaeological evidence. For instance, when we look at the city of Rome, we will find out that the literary evidence about the Jewish community there is meagre, but we do have some 600 inscriptions, and these are our most important source of information.² Several other such examples could be mentioned, but there are also instances of the reverse situation, such as Alexandria. Most of what we know about the Jewish presence in that major city derives from literary sources, not from inscriptions (of which we have only some 20 whereas the literary evidence is plentiful).

In the present paper I will focus my attention on an important area of the Jewish diaspora, sc., Asia Minor, in order to demonstrate that it is not literary sources but epigraphic materials which are our main source of information.³ The literary sources at our disposal are rather scarce: only a handful of references in pagan literary sources, several more in Josephus and the New Testament, and some also in the church fathers and in canons of church

1 See M.H. Williams, *Jews in a Graeco-Roman Environment* (WUNT 312; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 1–7.

2 See H.J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1960; repr. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995). L.V. Rutgers, *The Jews in Late Ancient Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

3 See P. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (SNTSMS 69; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); L.H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 69–74 *et aliter* (Index s.v. Asia Minor); J.G.M. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora From Alexander to Trajan* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1996), 259–281; I. Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting, vol. 5: Diaspora Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans & Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996), 137–152; P.W. van der Horst, 'Judaism in Asia Minor,' in M.R. Salzman & W. Adler (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Religions in Antiquity, Volume 11: From the Hellenistic Age to Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 321–340.

councils. Apart from the few references in Christian sources, most of the other literary evidence concerns the last three centuries BCE, and the picture that arises from it is not only rosy. We find that the Jews had to contend with repeated violations of their rights.⁴ The literary documents leave the impression that “in a number of cities in Asia Minor, Jews often met with local opposition to their rights and privileges and had to appeal to Roman authorities who always ruled in their favour.”⁵ The picture we get is that, although Jewish communities, keen to retain their own identity in the midst of a pagan society, often met with resistance, that very same society enabled them over the long run to maintain their way of life without insurmountable problems.⁶ On the whole, these communities seem to have been able to lead rather uneventful lives.⁷

On the other hand, we have some 260 Jewish inscriptions, the overwhelming majority in Greek and only a handful in Hebrew or other languages.⁸ And there are archaeological remains as well, not very many, but some are spectacular (I will briefly come back to that later). When we now take a look at these inscriptions, the first thing to be noticed is that, where the literary sources make it clear that by the first century CE, Jewish settlement had spread all over Asia Minor, this is more than confirmed by epigraphic evidence: we have inscriptions from at least some 75 Anatolian cities, towns, and villages, most of

4 Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora* 274: “[T]ime and again their communal institutions were challenged and their religious customs ignored.’ At pp. 259–278 Barclay sketches the situation of the communities of Asia Minor up to the time of Augustus solely on the basis of the literary sources. The contrast with the picture that arises from the (later) inscriptions is considerable.

5 Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, 5, 143.

6 There is, for instance, the important pro-Jewish edict issued by the Emperor Augustus in 12 BCE stating that the Jews “may follow their own customs in accordance with the law of their fathers ... and that their sacred monies shall be inviolable and may be sent to Jerusalem and delivered to the treasurers in Jerusalem and they need not give bond (to appear in court) on the Sabbath or on the day of preparation for it after the ninth hour; and if anyone is caught stealing their sacred books or their sacred monies from a synagogue or an ark (of the Law), he shall be regarded as sacrilegious and his property shall be confiscated to the public treasury of the Romans” (Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* 16.163–164).

7 W. Ameling, ‘Die jüdische Diaspora Kleinasiens und der ‘epigraphic habit,’ in J. Frey, D. Schwartz, S. Grippentrog (eds.), *Jewish Identity in the Greco-Roman World* (AJEC 71; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 255, states that “über Generationen hin kaum ein Aspekt ihres Lebens als geschichtswürdig im Sinne antiker Autoren galt.”

8 The old collection of material by Frey in *CIJ* 11 (1952) was notoriously bad, but fortunately all relevant material has now been conveniently collected in W. Ameling, *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis 11: Kleinasien* (TSAJ 99; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004). At pp. 571–574 Ameling also lists the literary sources for Judaism in Asia Minor (cf. also pp. 32–36).

them from the early centuries CE. But the total of 75 places of Jewish presence could never have been established on the basis of the literary documents alone; it is the epigraphic evidence that enables us to make much more specific the general information from the literary sources (which mention areas or countries much more often than cities and villages).⁹ But we have to bear in mind that the epigraphic evidence is mostly much later than that of the literary sources; most of the inscriptions date from the 2nd to 5th or even 6th centuries CE, a period in which Asia Minor flourished economically much more than in the Hellenistic age.

2 Phrygia

A very important aspect of the epigraphic record is that the inscriptions often testify to a high degree of integration and acceptance of the Jews in the surrounding society without their Jewish identity being compromised.¹⁰ Let us take the central Anatolian region of Phrygia as a clear example. In Ameling's collection (*IJO* 11) one finds 48 Jewish inscriptions from Phrygia almost half of which (23) are from the city of Hierapolis. We begin with the latter and will review only a limited selection of the rest of the material.¹¹ The vast majority of the evidence consists of epitaphs from the imperial period.¹²

On a sarcophagus lid of white marble with a chiseled menorah from the third century one finds only the word 'Jews' in the genitive plural (*Ioudeôn*, 187), which leaves unclear whether one should think here of a collective grave or of a Jewish cemetery. The sarcophagus is from Hierapolis and it is striking how often in tomb inscriptions from this city persons are explicitly identified as Jews (*Ioudaioi*), much more frequently than elsewhere. This phenomenon deserves to be studied more closely than can be done here, although it is clear at any

9 See Map B VI/18 of the *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients* with the title *Die jüdische Diaspora bis zum 7. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1992). For a list of place names not found in F. Millar's 1984 survey (in Schürer's *History*) but occurring in Ameling's 2004 edition see M.H. Williams, 'The Epigraphy of the Jewish Diaspora since the Publication of Schürer (revised), vol. III (1986),' *Bulletin of Judaeo-Greek Studies* 35 (2004–2005) 29. Williams makes clear how much progress has been made in 20 years.

10 See Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora* 259–281.

11 Numbers refer to the numbering in *IJO* 11.

12 For an introduction to the study of ancient Jewish epitaphs in general the reader is referred to my *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs. An Introductory Survey of a Millennium of Jewish Funerary Epigraphy (300 BCE–700 CE)* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1991).

rate that it is a pointer to Jewish self-consciousness (or self-definition).¹³ On a limestone sarcophagus from the same period, Glycon, the grandson of Socrates (!), warns that this tomb may not be opened (188), a warning that occurs also in nos. 202 and 206 (we will return to this topic presently). On another (189) it is said of the Jew Hikesios (“also called Judas”) that he is “a frequent winner in the holy games.” It remains unclear whether he was an athlete or a musician, but either way it indicates Jewish participation in events that in antiquity always had (pagan) religious undertones, which could make it difficult for Jews to participate in them without problems, it would seem.¹⁴ But that Jews did not keep away from them is well known from various other sources.¹⁵ In inscription 191 it seems that the tomb itself is called ‘Jewish’.¹⁶ It belongs to Heortasios, the Greek equivalent of Chaggai (*heortê* = feast), one of the many typically Jewish festal names in antiquity.¹⁷ As is also the case in many non-Jewish inscriptions, the author of this epitaph warns with threats of high fines against putting other deceased persons into his tomb (the long inscription no. 193 concerns almost exclusively the inculcation of precisely this prohibition and the fines imposed in cases of trespassing).¹⁸ The fine should be paid to the Jewish community, in some inscriptions more precisely to ‘the holy treasury’ (or ‘the most holy treasury,’ *to hierôtaton tamieion*). Often by way of an additional threat it is stated that a copy of the epitaph has been deposited in the local archive (nos. 189, 191, 192, 193, 196, 198, 199, 200, 205, 206, 208 etc.). We see here that the phenomenon of uttering maledictions against violators of tombs is taken over by Jews from their pagan neighbours.

13 The modern fad to render *Ioudaios* as ‘Judaean’ instead of ‘Jew’ is misleading and creates many more problems than it solves. I hope scholars will stop creating this unnecessary confusion. See the short but balanced discussion of this issue by F. Avemarie, ‘Jüdische Diasporagemeinden in der Antike: Ihr Selbstverständnis im Spiegel der Inschriften,’ in H.J. Körtner (ed.), *Kirche—Christus—Kerygma: Profil und Identität evangelischer Kirche(n)*, Neukirchener Verlag 2009, 21–61; reprinted in his *Neues Testament und früh rabbinisches Judentum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), here 51–52.

14 See, e.g., H.A. Harris, *Greek Athletics and the Jews* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1976).

15 See E.S. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge MA—London: Harvard University Press, 2002), 123–124.

16 Not 100 % certain; see Ameling, *IJO* 11, 407.

17 See M.H. Williams, ‘Jewish Festal Names in Antiquity: A Neglected Area of Onomastic Research,’ *JStJ* 36 (2005) 21–40, now reprinted in her *Jews in a Graeco-Roman Environment* 345–362.

18 On this kind of epigraphic threats see J.H.M. Strubbe, ‘Curses Against Violations of the Grave in Jewish Epitaphs from Asia Minor,’ in J.W. van Henten & P.W. van der Horst (eds.), *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy* (AGAJU 21; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 70–128.

Very interesting is a third-century inscription of 12 lines on a limestone sarcophagus (196) of a Jew with the long name Publius Aelius Glykon Zeuxianus Aelianus.¹⁹ It is of interest, firstly, because it informs us about the fact that Jews in Hierapolis were involved in the famous purple dye industry of the city (cf. Strabo, *Geogr.* 13.4.14), which reminds us strongly of Lydia, a Godfearer (i.e., a pagan sympathizer with Judaism) from Thyatira (also in Asia Minor), who was a seller of purple goods and is mentioned in Acts 16:14; and, secondly, because this inscription is one of the very few that mention Jewish festivals: both Pesach (*heortê tôn azymôn*) and the feast of Weeks (*heortê tês pentêkostês*) are mentioned here as the days on which the family tomb of the deceased should be festively adorned (on which I will say more later).²⁰ In another epitaph (205) the local Jewish community is called *katoikia tôn en Hierapolei katoikountôn Ioudaiôn*. It is a debated issue what semantic value *katoikia* has here,²¹ but it can hardly be doubted that one form or another of organization of the community is meant here, although it cannot be ruled out that—in view of the fact that *katoikein* also means ‘living’—it should be taken to indicate that the Jews had their own living quarter in the city, a phenomenon that we know also from other places in the ancient world, for instance from Alexandria.²² In another inscription, however, the local Jewish community is called *laos* (206), which is biblical terminology for the people of God. So much for the inscriptions from Hierapolis.

As far as other Phrygian cities and villages are concerned, the following inscriptions deserve to be mentioned. In Acmonia an extremely fascinating inscription has been found (no. 168), in which we are informed that some prominent members of the local Jewish community had had the synagogue restored that was built by Julia Severa. This woman is well known to us—she is mentioned in several other inscriptions and on coins from Acmonia as well. In the fifties and sixties of the first century CE, Julia Severa was priestess of the local emperor cult. So she was definitely not Jewish, on the contrary, she played a prominent role in one of the major pagan cults of the city. Even so, this inscription testifies to her warm interest in the Jewish community of Acmonia: she had the synagogue built at her own expense. Here one cannot

19 On the implications of this name for the status of this Jew see Ameling, *IJO* 11, 416.

20 On Jewish festivals mentioned in inscriptions see M.H. Williams, *The Jews Among Greeks and Roman. A Diasporan Sourcebook* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 59–63.

21 See the extensive discussion in Ameling, *IJO* 11, 433–435.

22 For instances see my *Philo's Flaccus. The First Pogrom* (PACS 2; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 157–158.

help thinking of the Roman centurion from Capernaum who, according to Luke 7:5, loved the Jewish people so much that he had a synagogue built there. Julia Severa was a woman from an aristocratic family (her son later became a senator in Rome), a lady who had close ties to members of the distinguished Roman family of the Turronii: one of them, Turronius Rapo, was a priest of the emperor cult as well and he is mentioned together with Julia Severa on coins of the city; but another member of that very same family, Turronius Cladus, is mentioned in our inscription as the 'head of the synagogue' (*archisynagôgos*) who saw to it that the restoration was carried out properly!²³ So he must have been a proselyte. The fact that here a socially very prominent woman from a distinguished family with an explicitly pagan role in the city makes such a generous gesture towards the Jewish community is a sign of the very successful integration of the Acmonian Jews and of the sympathy they have won with the non-Jewish inhabitants of the city.²⁴ A similar instance is an inscription from Tralles (in Caria) which states that the highly esteemed Capitolina, the wife of a priest of Zeus but also a Godfearer, had parts of the local synagogue renovated at her own expense (*IJO* 11 27). 'As with Julia Severa, this eminent position in the pagan cult (even though here it is her husband and not she herself who holds the office) does not at all preclude her making a contribution to the Jewish community and expressing her sympathy openly.'²⁵

Also from Acmonia is an epitaph (171) in which it is stipulated that each year at a fixed time the tomb should be adorned with roses and that, if the surviving relatives fail to do so, they will have to answer to God's justice (*tên dikaiosynên tou theou*) for that omission, a curious threat in view of the fact that adorning tombs with roses is an originally a pagan Roman festival ritual (the so-called *rosalia*), carried out annually at the grave, which had crossed over from Rome to Asia Minor.²⁶ It is very similar to the epitaph from Hierapolis, mentioned above (no. 196), in which it is said that the tomb should be adorned with wreaths

23 See S. Mitchell, *Anatolia. Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 9.

24 For other instances see Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* 310, although I totally disagree with his assertion that "we may conclude that she [Julia Severa] later converted to Judaism and then built the synagogue" (576 n. 120).

25 A Chester, 'Jewish Inscriptions and Jewish Life,' in R. Deines, J. Herzer & K.-W. Niebuhr (eds.), *Neues Testament und hellenistisch-jüdische Alltagskultur* (WUNT 274; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 410.

26 See Williams, *The Jews Among Greeks and Roman* 128; C.R. Phillips, 'Rosalia,' *DNP* 10 (2001) 1134–1135.

(*stephanoi*) on an annual basis, partly on the Feast of Unleavened Bread and partly on the Feast of Kalends, also a pagan custom adopted by Jews.²⁷

From the third century are two epitaphs which threaten anyone who posits a body into the tomb other than that of the deceased for whom it had been constructed with “the curses that are written in Deuteronomy” (173 and 174; a third copy is from Laodicea, no. 213). This is an interesting variant of the curse inscriptions that occur so frequently in Phrygian epitaphs, as we saw above. Undoubtedly the reference is to Deut. 28, where we read in the Septuagint version (*inter alia*): “(22) May the Lord strike you with difficulty and fever and irritation and murder and with blight and paleness, and they shall pursue you until they destroy you. ... (28–29) May the Lord strike you with derangement and blindness and distraction of mind, and you shall be groping about at midday as a blind person would grope in the darkness.”²⁸ And thus it goes on with one curse after another. I quoted on purpose vv. 28–29 since there blindness is mentioned, a form of punishment that is also mentioned explicitly in another Acmonian epitaph where the stone says: “If anyone opens this tomb, ..., he will be hit by the curses that have been written against his eyesight and the rest of his body” (172). Here Deuteronomy is not mentioned explicitly but the allusion is unmistakable.

In this connection it is interesting to see that in another epitaph, from Apameia, we find the significant words that, if someone dares to bury another person on that spot, “he knows the Law of the Jews” (170). This formulation seems to indicate that a certain knowledge of the Torah, however partial and superficial,²⁹ could be presupposed among Phrygian non-Jews, although that conclusion is not certain.³⁰ In another but related curse (175; probably also from

27 Ameling, *IJO* 11 p. 422, suggests that the one who commissioned this inscription may have been a Godfearer, which would explain why Jewish and pagan festivals are juxtaposed here.

28 Translation follows the one by M.K.H. Peters in A. Pietersma & B.G. Wright (eds.), *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (New York—Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 166.

29 Perhaps only knowledge of the curses in Deut. 28.

30 See also Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor*, 100. Cf. the inscription from Catania on Sicily where an epitaph from the end of the fourth century says, “I adjure you by the Law that the Lord gave the Jews” (*adiuro vos per legem quem Dominus dedit Iudaeis*); in *JWE* 1 no. 145. See Ameling, ‘Die jüdische Diaspora Kleinasien und der ‘epigraphic habit’ 279: “Ein Wissen über Juden gab es aber in fast allen Gegenden Kleinasien—auch wenn es manchmal einzig in das Reich des Aberglaubens gehörte, oder—wie im Fall des Diogenes von Oinoanda—auf alten Vorurteilen basierten (IJO 11 222).” This text from Diogenes of Oenoanda is discussed by me in “The Most Superstitious and Disgusting of All

the third century; cf. nr. 176) we find the following: "... if someone enters here another body, he will have to reckon with God Most High, and may the sickle of the curse enter his house and leave no one alive." The at first sight enigmatic expression 'the sickle of the curse' is almost certainly an allusion to the LXX version of Zech. 5:1, a verse in which the Hebrew text states that the prophet saw in a vision a flying scroll (*megillah*) which is interpreted by the angel as a curse that goes out over the entire country. But the LXX version evidently did not read *megillah* here but *maggal*, sickle, which is correctly translated by *drepanon*, the word used also in the inscription.³¹ That the sickle is seen in the LXX as an instrument of God's eschatological wrath, is made clear by the immediate context of the biblical verse (see v. 3; cf. also Joel 4:13 LXX).

A final example of biblically inspired threats is an epitaph that says that if someone deposits another body into that tomb or buys it, or even effaces a single letter of the inscription, "God's wrath shall destroy his entire family" (177; fourth century). Now there are also pagan and Christian tomb inscriptions that threaten trespassers with the wrath of God or the gods (much more frequently than in Jewish epitaphs³²), but that this is a Jewish inscription is made highly likely by the fact that exactly the same formula is found on the tombstone of an almost certainly Phrygian Jew in Rome.³³

On Deborah's grave in the town of Apollonia one finds a typically Greek metrical inscription in hexameters and pentameters³⁴ in which the deceased woman says that "she was given to a famous man" (180) and that she (or her husband) takes pride in the fact that she was a virgin when she married, something that was apparently seen as very praiseworthy in her Jewish environment. On a curious third- to fourth-century tombstone that was found someplace in Israel (perhaps in Jaffa)³⁵ it is stated that this is the tomb of "rabbi Samuel, the

Nations." Diogenes of Oenoanda on the Jews,' in A.P.M.H. Lardinois, M.G.M. van der Poel & V.J.C. Hunink (eds.), *Land of Dreams. Greek and Latin Studies in Honour of A.H.M. Kessels* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 291–298.

31 It is clear that this Phrygian Jew used the LXX and not one of the other Greek Bible translations: Aquila and Theodotion here correctly translate *megillah* with *diphthera*.

32 See A. Parrot, *Maledictions et violations de tombes* (Paris: Geuthner, 1939), 131 for a survey of formulas.

33 *JWE* II no. 360. The Jewish character of the Roman inscription has sometimes been doubted, but unnecessarily so; see Ameling in *IJO* II, 378–379 and also Noy ad loc.

34 On the (originally Greek) phenomenon of Jewish metrical epitaphs see my article 'Jewish Tomb Inscriptions in Verse' in my *Hellenism—Judaism—Christianity: Essays on Their Interaction* (Louvain: Peeters, 1998, second ed.), 27–47 (*IJO* II 180 should be added to this dossier).

35 See Ameling, *IJO* II 389–390.

Phrygian *archisynagôgos*" (184). The restoration of the text on this damaged stone is uncertain, but if this is what the stone mason wrote, one may assume that we have here the epitaph of a diaspora Jew who migrated from Phrygia to the Land of Israel in order to be buried there, a phenomenon that can be observed especially in the inscriptions from the catacombs of Beth She'arim and from the cemetery of Jaffa. It would be unwarranted to conclude on the basis of this epitaph that rabbis were the leaders of the local synagogues (*archisynagôgoi*) in Phrygia.³⁶ Firstly, the situation in which rabbis became the leading officials of diaspora communities is a much later development (not before the Middle Ages).³⁷ And secondly, in inscriptions the term *rabbi* hardly ever refers to an official (i.e., ordained) rabbi but usually to someone of distinction, for "in antiquity this title was applied to anyone of high standing."³⁸ It is very unlikely that there were rabbis in third- to fourth-century Phrygia.³⁹

Inscriptions from other places are less informative and I leave them out of account. We cannot ignore, however, some other pieces of inscriptional (and, in this case, numismatic) evidence which concern Noah and his ark in Phrygia. In Apameia, coins from the first half of the third century were found on which Noah and his wife are depicted with the ark (and the inscription *Nôe* added).⁴⁰ In addition to that, in a number of literary sources the town is called Apameia Kibotos.⁴¹ In the LXX *kibôtos* is the word used for Noah's ark. There was a legend in circulation to the effect that Noah's ark had stranded in the neighbourhood of the town on mount Ararat.⁴² Is this a case of Jewish influence? The coins were struck by the pagan authorities of the town, so the legend was also believed outside Jewish circles. And the fact that as early as the first century BCE the

36 On the term *archisynagôgos* see T. Rajak & D. Noy, 'Archisynagogoi: Office, Title and Social Status in the Graeco-Jewish Synagogue,' *JRS* 83 (1993) 75–93, and C. Claußen, *Versammlung, Gemeinde, Synagoge: Das hellenistisch-jüdische Umfeld der frühchristlichen Gemeinden* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 256–264.

37 See L.I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven—London: Yale University Press, 2000), 440–470.

38 L.I. Levine, *The Rabbinic Class of Roman Palestine in Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem: Yad Yizhaq Ben-Zvi, 1989), 15. For an (almost) exhaustive survey of epigraphical rabbis see S.J.D. Cohen, 'Epigraphical Rabbis,' *JQR* 72 (1981/82) 1–17.

39 Recently, however, Jonathan Price argued for a different reading and interpretation of this tombstone to the effect that the word 'Phrygian' is no longer read there; see *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae* 1/2 (2012) no. 1001 (p. 384). His seems to be a rather convincing case. CIIP 1/2 was published after the passage above had already been written.

40 For a picture of one such coin see Williams, *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans* 112.

41 For references see Schürer, *History of the Jewish People* 3.28–30.

42 See, e.g., *Or. Sib.* 1.196–198, 261–267.

geographer Strabo states that Apameia is also called Kibotos (*Geogr.* 12.8.13) would seem to prove that this legend was not introduced by later Christians in Phrygia.⁴³ Doubts arise, however, when one sees that on some earlier coins of the city, from the time of Hadrian (117–138), the plural *kibôtoi* is used and accompanied by a depiction of no less than five chests or arks. That suggests that the name Kibotos has a ‘non-Noachic’ origin (unknown to us) and that only afterwards this name became the reason for locating the landing of Noah’s ark there. Be that as it may, the fact that a scene from the Jewish Bible was depicted on the coins of the town Apameia strongly suggests Jewish influence.⁴⁴

3 Theos Hypsistos

Finally I will mention only briefly the cult of Theos Hypsistos. Stephen Mitchell collected some 375 inscriptions of devotees of Theos Hypsistos, a deity that was worshiped all over the eastern Mediterranean but especially in Asia Minor.⁴⁵ Theos Hypsistos is a designation that was used in both pagan and Jewish circles as an epithet of the highest god (God Most High), mostly Zeus and Yahweh. Of these inscriptions, 26 are from Phrygia (nos. 205–227, A53–A55) and in most cases it is impossible to tell whether we are concerned with a pagan or a Jewish inscription. This somewhat elusive cult most probably concerned syncretistic groups who made a conscious attempt to bridge the gap between paganism and Judaism. Its origins probably lay not in Jewish but in henotheistic pagan circles where the attractiveness of the Jewish religion was felt so strongly that one looked for common ground. As Mitchell says, “The cult of Theos Hypsistos had room for pagans and for Jews. More than that, it shows that the principal categories into which we divide the religious groupings of late antiquity are simply inappropriate or misleading when applied to the beliefs and practices

43 In the sixties of the first century Pliny the Elder says the same (*Nat. Hist.* 5.29.106).

44 Thus rightly Trebilco, *Jewish Communities* 86–95. Schürer, *History* 3.30, discusses yet another case of possibly Jewish influence upon Phrygian legend formation, but that is even more uncertain.

45 ‘The Cult of Theos Hypsistos,’ in P. Athanassiadi & M. Frede (eds.), *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 128–148; idem, ‘Further Thoughts on the Cult of Theos Hypsistos,’ in S. Mitchell & P. van Nuffelen (eds.), *One God: Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 204–205. Mitchell’s catalogue of inscriptions is divided over these two articles. For a recent study on the basis of network analysis see A. Collar, *Religious Networks in the Roman Empire: The Spread of New Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 224–286.

of a significant proportion of the population of the eastern Roman empire" (115). Mitchell shows that what we know of the so-called Godfearers (*theosebeis, sebomenoi*), pagan sympathizers with Judaism,⁴⁶ agrees to such a degree with the information we have about the adherents of the Theos Hypsistos cult that it is quite possible that we have to regard these two groups as identical. If this intriguing hypothesis were correct—and it is confirmed in a recent study on the basis of network analysis of the epigraphic remains of both cults⁴⁷—it would again be a confirmation of the important role Phrygian Jews played in the process of religious interaction.

A very strong argument Mitchell adduces for identifying Hypsistarians with Godfearers is what he calls the "uncanny parallel" (120) between Josephus' description of Godfearers and the Cappadocian Father Gregory of Nazianze's description of Hypsistarians. The first one says about the Godfearers:

The [non-Jewish] masses have long since shown a keen desire to adopt our religious observances, and there is not one city, Greek or barbarian, not a single nation to which our custom of abstaining from work on the seventh day has not spread, and where the fasts and lighting of lamps and many of our prohibitions in the matter of food are not observed.⁴⁸

And Gregory says about the Hypsistarians (a sect to which his own father had belonged!):

This cult was a mixture of two elements, Hellenic error and adherence to the Jewish law. Shunning some parts of both, it was made up from others. Its followers reject the idols and sacrifices of the former and worship fire and lamplight; they revere the sabbath and are scrupulous not to touch certain foods, but have nothing to do with circumcision.⁴⁹

It does not plead against the identification of Hypsistarians and Godfearers that in the inscriptions one sometime finds other gods mentioned than Theos Hypsistos (e.g., Zeus, Helios, Men, Cybele, Larmene).⁵⁰ This apparent polytheism

46 B. Wanders, *Gottesfürchtige und Sympathisanten* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), is the best treatment to date. See also Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*, vol. 5: *Diaspora Setting*, 50–125.

47 Collar, *Religious Networks in the Roman Empire* 224–286.

48 *C. Ap.* 2.282.

49 *Or.* 18.5 (PG 35:989–991). Mitchell adduces other Patristic evidence as well.

50 Instances can be found easily in Mitchell, 'The Cult of Theos Hypsistos,' 129–147.

does not militate against the essentially henotheistic nature of the cult, since in Hypsistarian circles gods other than the Most High were often regarded as his angels. This is also clearly laid out in the second or third century CE inscription from Oenoanda containing an oracle in which the Clarian Apollo says that he and other gods are no more than angels of the highest god (SEG 27 [1977] 933 = no. 233 in Mitchell's list).⁵¹ In general it can be said that in the century between 150 and 250 CE, the oracles of Apollo at Claros and Didyma forged a kind of new theology which can be seen as "a persistent effort to integrate the pantheon of paganism into a system governed by a single guiding principle or a supreme god."⁵² An impressive testimony to that effort is another oracle of the Clarian Apollo, in which he says that Yahweh (Iaô) is the Highest God, who is called Hades in winter, Zeus in spring, Helios in summer, and Iakchos (= Dionysus) in autumn.⁵³ Here we see the priests of Apollo in Asia Minor proclaiming the god of the Jews as the Highest God, a very striking phenomenon indeed.

Let us try to draw some provisional conclusions. The evidence is too scanty and chronologically too scattered to enable us to draw conclusions that have general validity for all Jews in Phrygia during the eight centuries for which we have information. What we can say, however, is that the material from the Roman imperial period gives the impression of a high degree of integration of the Jewish communities into society as a whole, exactly as we can also observe that phenomenon elsewhere in Asia Minor. Much of the epigraphic evidence points to good relationships with the non-Jews of Phrygia: the building of a synagogue by a Roman priestess of the emperor cult, Jewish participation in important cultural events (sport or music), the adoption by Jews of such (pagan) funerary customs as the *rosalia*, Jewish involvement in the Phrygian purple dye industry, probable knowledge of certain biblical texts among non-Jews, local acquaintance (in Apameia) with the story of Noah and the ark, and, last but not least, the strong presence of the mixed Jewish-pagan cult of the Theos

51 See also G. Zuntz, *Griechische philosophische Hymnen* (hrsgg. von H. Cancik & L. Käppel, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 89–94; R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), ch. 4.

52 Mitchell, *Anatolia*, II 43.

53 Quoted by Cornelius Labeo, *De oraculo Apollinis Clarii*, fr. 18 Mastandrea (ap. Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.18.19–20). See P. Mastandrea, *Un neoplatonico latino: Cornelio Labeone (testimonianze e frammenti)* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 159–192 (160–161 on the textcritical problem of the last name); Zuntz, *Griechische Philosophische Hymnen* 76. On this oracle see also my article 'Porphiry on Judaism,' in my *Studies in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (AJEC 87; Leiden: Brill, 2014), 188–202.

Hypsistos. Furthermore, the later literary sources (Canones of Laodicea, Theophanes Confessor) clearly imply that there were surprisingly good relations between Jews and Christians in this area. One thing is clear: Jews and Judaism were taken seriously by many non-Jews in ancient Phrygia.⁵⁴

4 Aphrodisias

Let us now look briefly at Jewish communities elsewhere in Asia Minor. Another striking example of close contacts between Jews and non-Jews is the recently discovered inscription from Aphrodisias in Caria on a huge marble block or pillar almost three meters high and some 45 centimeters wide, inscribed on two sides with two long Greek inscriptions of 86 lines (IJO II 14).⁵⁵ They most probably—but not certainly—date from the late fourth or fifth, perhaps even sixth century CE.⁵⁶ The greatest part of the text consists of lists of some 125 names⁵⁷ mentioned as donors or contributors to a local synagogue institution, which is identified tentatively by the editors as the Jewish community's soup-kitchen but which may more probably have been the collective burial place of that community.⁵⁸ The 125 or so names of the benefactors are subdivided into three categories: 68 are Jews (although they are not explicitly so described, the overwhelming preponderance of Biblical and Hebrew names leaves no room for any other conclusion); 54 are called 'Godfearers,' *theosebeis*;

54 I leave out of account here the inscriptions with the so-called 'Eumeneian formula' (*estai autōi pros ton theon*, and many variants) for which I refer to P. Trebilco, 'The Christian and Jewish Eumeneian Formula,' in J.M.G. Barclay (ed.), *Negotiating Diaspora. Jewish Strategies in the Roman Empire* (London-New York: Clark—Continuum, 2004), 66–88.

55 J. Reynolds & R. Tannenbaum, *Jews and Godfearers at Aphrodisias* (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1987; on its relevance P.W. van der Horst, 'Jews and Christians in Aphrodisias in the Light of Their Relations in Other Cities of Asia Minor,' in idem, *Essays on the Jewish World of Early Christianity* (Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus 14; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag-Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 166–181.

56 On the problems of dating this inscription see esp. A. Chaniotis, 'The Jews of Aphrodisias: New Evidence and Old Problems,' *Studia Classica Israelica* 21 (2002) 209–242; and M.H. Williams, 'The Jews and Godfearers Inscription from Aphrodisias,' in her *Jews in a Graeco-Roman Environment* (WUNT 312; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 217–230.

57 The uncertainty about the exact numbers of persons is due partly to the damaged state of the stone, partly to the fact that it is not certain whether or not some names are patronymics; see Reynolds, Tannenbaum, *Jews and Godfearers*, 93–96.

58 See for the latter interpretation Ameling's commentary on IJO II 14.

three are proselytes. This strikingly high percentage of Godfearers, i.e., pagan sympathizers with Judaism, in a list of benefactors and contributors to a Jewish institution, is the great surprise of this inscription. We knew from the Book of Acts and from Josephus that in many cities of the ancient world synagogues had sympathizers in the form of a body of permanent or semi-permanent 'catechumens'.⁵⁹ The author of Acts leaves us in no doubt about the presence of a sizeable body of Godfearers in the major cities of Asia Minor. Josephus even reports, with characteristic exaggeration, that most of the pagan women of Damascus belonged to this category, and that in Syrian Antioch the number of sympathizers was also extremely great (*Bell.* 2.560; 7.43–45).⁶⁰ It was among these Godfearers that, according to Acts, Paul made most of his early converts. If we leave out of account Josephus' exaggerating reports, neither from Acts nor from inscriptional evidence was it possible to gauge the exact extent of this phenomenon of pagans sympathizing to various degrees with Judaism (although the literary and epigraphic attestation for Godfearers in Asia Minor is not negligible⁶¹). But in the Aphrodisias inscription we now have for the first time an indication of the degree of influence of the synagogue on local pagans in a middle-sized city of Asia Minor. And we have to bear in mind that this inscription records only the names of the contributors, that is, probably of only a part of the more well-to-do citizens among the Godfearers. Even so there are no less than 54 of them listed.⁶² As a matter of fact we can see that the jobs done by the Godfearers, of which some 22 are given in the inscription, cover a wide range of occupations only very few of which indicate lower social status.⁶³ Most remarkable is the fact that nine of them are *bouleutai*, city councillors. In the later Roman Empire, this office implied heavy financial obligations and could only be exercised by the wealthy of a city. So what we are now able to see is that, in Aphrodisias at least, the Jews attracted large numbers of local gentiles—again, the people recorded form undoubtedly only a part of the total group of Godfearers—and persons of high standing and great influence at that. When pagan local magistrates heartily support and partly pay for the foundation of a Jewish institution, one cannot but conclude that the Jewish community of that

59 Wanders, *Gottesfürchtige und Sympathisanten*, 143–154, 180–203.

60 On these and other cases of 'adherence' and 'conversion' in Josephus see S.J.D. Cohen, 'Respect for Judaism by Gentiles According to Josephus,' *HTR* 80 (1987) 409–430.

61 See Mitchell, 'The Cult of Theos Hypsistos Between Pagans, Jews, and Christians,' 117–118; idem, 'Further Thoughts on the Cult of Theos Hypsistos,' 189–196.

62 Altogether we now know some 75 Godfearers (and some 20 proselytes) from ancient Jewish inscriptions.

63 Reynolds & Tannenbaum, *Jews and Godfearers*, 116–123, esp. 119–122.

city was influential to a degree which hitherto could hardly have been imagined. Its members appear to have been self-confident, accepted in the city, and evidently able to attract the favourable attention of many gentile fellow Aphrodisians.

It is hard not to speculate about what the implications were of the strong position Judaism had in the city of Aphrodisias for the development of Christianity in that city (and the region of Caria in general). After all, we see that, whereas in the pre-Constantinian period Asia Minor was the Christian territory *par excellence* in the ancient world, the district of Caria with its capital Aphrodisias was a striking exception. We do not hear anything about Christian churches or bishops in that city and district before the council of Nicaea (in 325) and no Christian inscription from that area predates the second half of the fourth century CE. This stands in sharp contrast to all other regions of Western Asia Minor, where Christianity is attested in either the first or second century or at the latest the third. But not so in Caria, not so in Aphrodisias. Why is that? We can only speculate, but could it not be the strong Jewish presence in the city and the region that caused the church to have so little and so late success there? I will leave the matter at that because I have written at length about it elsewhere, but I think it deserves serious consideration.⁶⁴

5 Altars of Godfearers

Let us come back to the Godfearers. They were not full converts to Judaism and hence had a relative freedom in following or not following the commandments of the Jewish Bible. One of the biblical commandments was that sacrifices to the God of Israel were to be offered only in the temple of Jerusalem. Now a recent find may indicate that Godfearers felt free to sacrifice to this God also in their own hometown. *IJO* II 218 is an inscription on a small private altar found in Aspendos in Pamphylia and probably dating from the first or second century CE.⁶⁵ It reads “For the truthful god who is not made with hands (in fulfillment of) a vow” (*theôi apseudei kai acheiropoiêtôi euchên*). The interpretation of this inscription is debated.⁶⁶ The terminology (esp. the use of *acheiropoiêtos*)

64 See my ‘Jews and Christians in Aphrodisias in the Light of Their Relations in Other Cities of Asia Minor.’

65 For what follows see P.W. van der Horst, ‘A New Altar of a Godfearer?’ in idem, *Hellenism—Judaism—Christianity: Essays on Their Interaction* (2nd ed.; Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 65–72.

66 For a survey see Ameling, *IJO* II 458–461.

strongly suggests a Jewish origin, but it is hard to imagine a Jewish altar outside the Jerusalem temple.⁶⁷ It seems much more credible to look for the origin of this altar-inscription in the circles of Godfearers. If one is in a position to decide for oneself which elements of the Jewish way of life one adopts and which one does not, then the problem of a Jewish altar outside a Jewish temple disappears. A pagan Judaizer who did want to confess his belief in the one true God who is not made with hands, need certainly not have felt himself constrained by the centralization of the sacrificial cult in Jerusalem (or the ceasing of that cult after 70, if the inscription was engraved after the destruction of the temple). As a non-Jew he was free to bring sacrifices to the God of the Jewish people wherever he wanted. A private altar, erected by himself before his house or in the backyard, was one of the possibilities. And indeed, in the soil of Pergamum a small altar has been discovered with an inscription that is regarded by several scholars as having been engraved by a Godfearer.⁶⁸ The text runs as follows: at the top of the altar we read *theos kyrios ho ôn eis aei*,⁶⁹ “God the Lord is the one who is forever” (or: “God is the Lord who is forever”), and at the lower part of the altar we read: “Zopyrus (dedicated) to the Lord this altar and the lampstand with the lantern.” In this case, too, the combination of the fact that it is an altar from the second century CE and the clearly Jewish terminology is sufficient reason to regard the inscription as belonging to a pagan sympathizer or Judaizer, i.e., a Godfearer. Elias Bickerman rightly remarked that throughout antiquity for a pagan Greek or Roman bringing sacrifices was essentially part and parcel of his daily life and that “rabbinic doctors of the Law approved of gentile altars to God. (...) The situation was paradoxical. While the sons of Abraham, after the destruction of the Temple, were no more able to make offerings to God, a sweet savor continued to go up to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob from sacrifices offered by God-fearing gentiles. Yet the rabbis abetted this impairment of the privileges of the chosen people.”⁷⁰

67 We do know of Jewish temples elsewhere than in Jerusalem, but not of private altars.

68 See M.P. Nilsson, ‘Zwei Altäre aus Pergamon,’ *Eranos* 54 (1956) 167–173; G. Delling, ‘Die Altarinschrift eines Gottesfürchtigen in Pergamon,’ in idem, *Studien zum Neuen Testament und zum hellenistischen Judentum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 32–38; E. Bickerman, ‘The Altars of Gentiles. A Note on the Jewish ‘*ius sacrum*’,’ in idem, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History* II (Leiden: Brill, 1980, 324–346; in the new edition, *AJEC* 68, Leiden: Brill, 2007, 596–617). This inscription has not been included by Ameling in *IJO* II.

69 Note the allusion to Exod. 3:14 ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν.

70 Bickerman, ‘The Altars of Gentiles,’ 344 (615).

6 Sardis

The best known example of Jewish integration into Graeco-Roman city life is found in the city of Sardis.⁷¹ In 1962, American archaeologists unearthed the greatest ancient synagogue ever in the city of Sardis, capital of ancient Lydia. The colossal basilica-shaped building measures almost 20 × 100 meters and could accommodate some 1000 people. This richly decorated basilica is an integral part of a huge municipal bath-and-gymnasium complex with a shopping mall in the city centre and as such it is a monument to the integration of the Jewish community in this Graeco-Roman city.⁷² The building is one of the most prominent features of the city's urban landscape, as every modern visitor can now easily see. Even apart from the enormous size, this points to the fact that the Jewish community of Sardis was definitely not a 'quantité négligeable.' Minorities in a city do not usually get hold of a central and prestigious building if they do not have any clout and influence there. That the Jews did indeed have this influence is amply confirmed by the more than 80 Greek inscriptions found in the synagogue, which demonstrate that no less than nine of the Jews mentioned are *bouleutai*, i.e., members of the city council (*boulê*), the highest administrative body of the city.⁷³ Here we see Jews who have climbed up to the highest rung on the social ladder, for "the councils of Greek cities under the Late Empire were open only to the wealthier families, with membership, once purchased, being hereditary and held for life."⁷⁴ So distinguished and well-to-do Jewish families here participated in the government of the city.⁷⁵ No wonder, then, that here, unlike elsewhere in the fifth and sixth centuries, the synagogue was not expropriated by the Christians in order to be converted into a church building. This basilica could have been a magnificent church, but what happened in fact was that during the fifth and sixth centuries the Christians in

71 From the abundant literature I refer *exempli gratia* only to A.R. Seager & A.T. Kraabel, 'The Synagogue and the Jewish Community,' in G.M.A. Hanfmann (ed.), *Sardis from Prehistoric to Roman Times* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 168–190; and L.I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue. The First Thousand Years* (New Haven—London: Yale University Press, 2000), 242–249, where further references can be found.

72 Seager & Kraabel, 'The Synagogue and the Jewish Community,' *passim*.

73 Note that here, again, six non-Jewish donors are explicitly called 'God-fearers' (*theosebeis*, *IJO* 11 67, 68, 83, 123, 125, 132). See now the caveat by Martin Goodman, 'Jews and Judaism in the Mediterranean Diaspora,' in his *Judaism in the Roman World* (*AJEC* 66; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 233–259.

74 J.H. Kroll, 'The Greek Inscriptions of the Sardis Synagogue,' *HTR* 94 (2001) 10.

75 Also elsewhere, we have evidence of the relative affluence of Jewish families, e.g., in Phrygian Acmonia; see Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 35; *IJO* 11 172 and 173 are striking cases.

Sardis had to make do with a much smaller building than the synagogue. A striking difference from the famous Aphrodisias inscription, which also mentions nine *bouleutai*, is that there the city councilors are all gentiles whereas here they are Jews. 'The Sardis dossier stands out for its sheer richness and scale, and for the striking vitality of late Roman Judaism that it conveys, a vitality that appears all the more remarkable because of the growing strength of Christianity at the same period in history.'⁷⁶

Let us finally have a quick look at an intriguing inscription from this synagogue, IJO II no. 132. In a literal translation it says: 'Having found, having broken, read, observe' (*heurôn klasas anagnôthi phylaxon*). The imperatives 'read' and 'observe' (or 'keep') hardly leave other interpretations than that reading of the Torah is meant here and that it is inculcated in the minds of the community members that they should not only read or listen to this holy text with its commandments but also live in accordance with it.⁷⁷ Probably the plaque with this inscription had been attached to the Torah shrine. It is not easy to say what exactly 'having broken' (*klasas*) implies, but presumably it refers to the breaking of seals or unlocking of locks on the Torah scroll.⁷⁸ Be that as it may, it is clear that the central position of the Torah was part of the identity of this community.⁷⁹

7 Jewish Identity

The clear proofs of peaceful coexistence and *rapprochement* between Jews and non-Jews (both pagan and Christian) in Asia Minor should not cause us to doubt that most of these Jews attached great importance to maintaining their Jewish identity and singularity. This is most visible in the epigraphic material,

⁷⁶ Kroll, 'Greek Inscriptions,' 48. That the growing strength of Christianity could also have the effect of Jews stressing more and more their distinctive Jewishness (e.g., by adopting more frequently Hebrew names) is illustrated for Cilician Corycus by M.H. Williams, 'The Jews of Corycus—A Neglected Diasporan Community from Roman Times,' *JStJ* 25 (1994) 274–286.

⁷⁷ Thus also L.H. Feldman, 'Diaspora Synagogues: New Light from Inscriptions and Papyri,' in S. Fine (ed.), *Sacred Realm. The Emergence of the Synagogue in the Ancient World* (New York—Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 64–65.

⁷⁸ Thus Trebilco, *Jewish Communities* 51; his alternative suggestion that what is meant is 'breaking open a text by discussing its meaning' seems far-fetched.

⁷⁹ See W. Ameling, 'Eine liturgische Inschrift aus der Synagoge von Sardes,' in *Klassisches Altertum, Spätantike und frühes Christentum* (Fs A. Lippold) (Würzburg: Der christliche Osten, 1993), 495–508; see now also his brief comments in IJO II p. 287.

but not only there. One finds their central institution, the synagogue, mentioned many times (several times as ‘most holy synagogue’);⁸⁰ the functions they had in their religious community (*archisynagôgos*, *archôn*, *presbyteros*, *gerousiarchês*, *grammateus*, *diakonos*, *anagnôstês*, *hiereus*, *psalmologos*, *phrontistês*);⁸¹ the repeated references to their Bible (see above on the curses from Deuteronomy⁸²) and to reading and studying the Bible (1JO II 14,2–5 from Aphrodisias; 131 from Sardis); the mention of their religious festivals (Pesach and Festival of Weeks in no. 196,7 from Hierapolis); their commitment to the annual collecting of the Temple tax before 70 (see Augustus’ decree in *Ant. Jud.* 16.163–164); the regulations for kosher food in Sardis and no doubt elsewhere (see the decree in *Ant. Jud.* 14.259–261); their request for exemption from military service in order not to desecrate the sabbath (*Ant. Jud.* 16.163–164);⁸³ the references to God’s punishment and judgement on tombstones (see the curses in their epitaphs); the numerous representations of the menorah; and last but not least, the frequent self-identification as *Ioudaios* (especially in Hierapolis). It is clear that for most of the Imperial period the Jews of Asia Minor formed self-conscious communities which were in intense interaction with their surroundings, both pagan and Christian. It is only from the end of the fourth century CE onwards that the anti-Jewish legislation of the Christian emperors began to make Jewish life increasingly difficult.⁸⁴

80 See 1JO II, p. 624 s.v. Cf. also the term *sambatheion* (synagogue?) in 1JO II no. 149. For many other references to inscriptions mentioning a ‘(most) holy synagogue,’ a ‘sacred precinct,’ or a ‘holy place’ see F. Avemarie, ‘Jüdische Diasporagemeinden in der Antike: Ihr Selbstverständnis im Spiegel der Inschriften,’ in H.J. Körtner (ed.), *Kirche—Christus—Kerygma: Profil und Identität evangelischer Kirche(n)*, (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 2009), 21–61; reprinted in his *Neues Testament und früh rabbinisches Judentum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), here 57–58.

81 On the meanings of these designations (quite often obscure) see van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs*, 85–101; Levine, *Ancient Synagogue*, 387–428. Note that there is no mention of rabbis, who apparently had no influence in Asia Minor till the early Middle Ages (1JO no. 184 is only an apparent exception; see Ameling *ad locum*). It is telling that in at least some, but probably more, places women even had leading functions (or honorary positions) in the communities (1JO II 14, 25, 36, 43); see B.J. Brooton, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue. Inscriptional Evidence and Background Issues* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982), and Trebilco, *Jewish Communities*, 104–126.

82 In 1JO II 175 and 176 one also finds references to Zechariah 5:1–4.

83 See the discussion in Trebilco, *Jewish Communities*, 16–18.

84 Quite telling is a recently discovered inscription from the fifth or sixth century, found in a church on the island of Icaria, which says, “It is impossible that you will ever hear the truth from Jews at Icaria!” (1JO II 5a).

Early Jewish Epigraphy: What Can We Learn?

1 Introduction

The single most important contribution of early Jewish epigraphy is that the inscriptions, especially the many in Greek, yield data that one cannot retrieve from the literary sources.¹ We have thousands of pages of Judaeo-Greek literature, thousands of pages of Dead Sea Scrolls literature, and thousands of pages of rabbinic literature, but all these abundant sources do not, or do not sufficiently, inform us about quite a number of aspects of Jewish life that the inscriptions do inform us about, even though we have only some 4,000 of them, all of them from the millennium between 300 BCE and 700 CE, most of them epitaphs. *Saxa judaica loquuntur!* Jewish stones speak out! Let us briefly review some of the areas about which they speak to us.²

2 Diaspora

First, the extent of the diaspora: Several literary sources do mention the fact that in the centuries around the turn of the era a great number of Jews lived outside the Land of Israel. Best known are the following passages: Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium* 214; Josephus, *Bellum* 2.398, 7.43; *Oracula Sibyllina* 3.271; Strabo, *ap.* Josephus, *Antiquitates* 14.115; Seneca *ap.* Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 6.11; Acts of the Apostles 2.9–11. These impressive lists of countries where Jews lived and remarks to the effect that Jews lived in many regions and that their customs had become prevalent almost everywhere (cf. Seneca's famous dictum: *victi victoribus leges dederunt*) leave no doubt about the impressive size of the Jewish diaspora. Yet this information is far from being complete. To begin with, these passages reflect the situation in the first centuries BCE and CE, not that of later centuries. And, moreover, it is the epigraphic material that shows us that the

1 See also A. Chester, 'Jewish Inscriptions and Jewish Life,' in R. Deines et al. (eds.), *Neues Testament und hellenistisch-jüdische Alltagskultur* (WUNT 274; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 383–441.

2 I have to leave out of my discussion here the fact that the practice of engraving epitaphs and donor inscriptions was adopted among Jews under Greek influence; thus rightly C. Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (TSAJ 81; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 374.

diaspora was much more extensive than the literary data suggest and that this situation prevailed even more in later centuries. Anyone who takes a look at map B VI 18 ('Die jüdische Diaspora bis zum 7. Jahrhundert n. Chr.') of the *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients* (TAVO)³ will see that it is epigraphical material that has made us aware of Jewish presence in areas that are never mentioned in the ancient literary sources (such as Spain, Morocco, Germany, the Crimea etc.).⁴ Most of this epigraphic material is in Greek, even in Jewish Palestine. For instance, more than 95% of the inscriptions from Asia Minor are in Greek, more than 90% in Egypt, and so is some 80% of those in Rome. (In this connection it is telling that of the 609 papyri from the Roman Near East in general found outside Egypt—the vast majority of which are from Roman and Byzantine Palestine—some 325 are also in Greek: that is almost 55%!⁵). The question of whether these percentages reflect the degree to which Greek was spoken as the daily language of the Jews is a very complicated one that cannot be dealt with here,⁶ but at any rate it can be taken for sure that Greek was spoken widely by Jews in the diaspora.⁷

3 Mobility

Many inscriptions also testify to the mobility of Jews within the ancient world.⁸ In epitaphs we find, for instance, a Jew from Jerusalem buried in Athens (*IJO*

3 TAVO B VI 18 (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1992).

4 A somewhat outdated but still useful survey of the Jewish diaspora by F. Millar can be found in E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, rev. ed. by G. Vermes a.o., vol. 3/1 (Edinburgh: Clark, 1986), 1–86. See the epigraphical update in H. Bloedhorn, 'Appendix: Inschriften,' *JSS* 35 (1999) 64–72, and in M.H. Williams, 'The Epigraphy of the Jewish Diaspora since the Publication of Schürer (revised, vol. 111, 1986),' *Bulletin of Judaeo-Greek Studies* 35 (2004–2005) 26–33. For a major study of the diaspora see J.M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora from Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1996).

5 Based on H.M. Cotton, W.E.H. Cockle & F.G.B. Millar, 'The Papyrology of the Roman Near East: A Survey,' *JRS* 85 (1995) 214–235.

6 See, e.g., P.W. van der Horst, 'Greek in Jewish Palestine in the Light of Jewish Epigraphy,' in J.J. Collins & G.E. Sterling (eds.), *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 174–194; repr. in his *Japheth in the Tents of Shem: Studies on Jewish Hellenism in Antiquity* (CEBT 32; Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 9–26; see also my brief remarks in ch. 1 above.

7 See K. Treu, 'Die Bedeutung des Griechischen für die Juden im Römischen Reich,' *Kairos* 15 (1973) 123–144.

8 See Williams, *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans* 10–13; now esp. C. Hezser, *Jewish Travel in Antiquity* (TSAJ 144; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

1 Ach26), one from Tiberias in Taenarum (Laconia, *IJO* 1 Ach55), one from Caesarea buried someplace in Greece (*IJO* 1 Ach34), one from Arad in Athens (*IJO* 1 Ach32), one from Alexandria in Phthioitic Thebes (*IJO* 1 Ach16); in Rome we find graves of Jews from Thabraca (Numidia; *JIWE* 11 508), from Catania (*JIWE* 11 238), from Tripolis (which one is unknown; *JIWE* 11 113), from Tiberias (*JIWE* 11 561); many Jews from Egypt were buried in Jaffa; and thus one could go on. Of course we know also many such instances from the Acts of the Apostles, for instance, the Alexandrian Jew Apollos who went to live in Ephesus (Acts 18:24; cf. 13:1). I leave out of account here the many diasporan Jews whose epitaphs were found in Galilean Beth She'arim because in those cases we most probably are concerned with pious Jews who wanted to be buried in the same place as the great Rabbi Jehuda ha-Nasi (the compiler of the Mishna) and not so much with Jews who moved around the Graeco-Roman world.⁹

4 Onomastics

Another area of research that has benefited enormously from Jewish epigraphy is that of onomastics. A glance in Tal Ilan's *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity*¹⁰ makes immediately and abundantly clear how great the contribution of Jewish epigraphy is to our knowledge of Greek and other names borne by Jews. It is from inscriptions that we learn, more than from any other sources, for instance, the extent to which Jews bore festal and theophoric names. Festal names¹¹ are names related to Jewish festal days or periods, such as Shabbat or Pesach, e.g., Sabbataios or Sambation, Paschasios, Heortasios (Chaggai), Noumenios (Rosh Chodesh) etc. It is inscriptions (and papyri) that show us how widely used such names were, most probably in order to bolster one's Jewish identity. The opposite, however, seems to be the case in the many personal names that contain pagan theophoric elements,¹² such as Isidorus (gift of Isis),

9 Williams, *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans* 75–78, mentions dozens of examples of diasporan burials in Israel.

10 T. Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity* (4 vols.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002–2012).

11 See M.H. Williams, 'Jewish Festal Names in Antiquity: A Neglected Area of Onomastic Research,' *JStJ* 36 (2005) 21–40; repr. in her *Jews in a Graeco-Roman Environment* (WUNT 312; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 363–387. See also the other onomastic studies at pp. 289–387 in her book.

12 See G. Mussies, 'Jewish Personal Names in Some Non-Literary Sources,' in J.W. van Henten & P.W. van der Horst (eds), *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy* (AGAJU 21; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 242–276, esp. 247 f.

Artemidorus (gift of Artemis), Zenodorus (gift of Zeus), Hermias (a derivation of Hermes), Heracleides, Serapion, Dionysia, even Venus.¹³ Should we assume that the origin of these names was completely unknown to the Jews who gave their children such utterly pagan-sounding names? Or did they simply not care that their children bore a name with a pagan theophoric element? These are important questions that are, however, very difficult to answer, if answerable at all.¹⁴

5 'Pagan' Elements

Related to the last-mentioned problem is the occurrence of Greek mythological motifs and names in Jewish tomb inscriptions. There are epitaphs from Leontopolis in Egypt which refer to Hades, the god of the netherworld, to Lethe, the river of forgetfulness in Hades (*JIGRE* 34, 38, 39), to Charon, the ferryman in Hades (*JIGRE* 141), and one from Beth She'arim in Galilee that even mentions 'mighty Moira,' the Greek goddess of Fate (*BS* 2.127)! Even though it should be kept in mind that mythological names such as Hades, Lethe, and Moira could be used in a figurative or metaphorical sense, it is still remarkable that these names with their pagan associations are not avoided here. To be sure, these elements occur mainly in the epitaphs of two locations (Leontopolis and Beth She'arim), but that does not make them less significant. Moreover, there are other instances of Jewish compromises with Graeco-Roman culture as attested in inscriptions, such as the adoption of pagan funerary customs (annual banquets in memory of the deceased and decking of their tombs with flowers [*IJO* II 171]), Jewish attendance at the theatre and hippodrome (*IJO* II 15–16, 37; III Syri), undergoing a gymnasium education (*IJO* I Ach53; II 22), pagan rituals such as incubation in a non-Jewish temple (*IJO* I Ach45), and visiting pagan shrines (*JIGRE* 121–122), etc.¹⁵

13 A striking example on the Christian side is the name Origen (son of [the god] Horus).

14 Inscriptions also shed more light on the names of Jewish congregations than do the literary sources; see P.W. van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs: An Introductory Survey of a Millennium of Jewish Funerary Epigraphy (300 BCE–700 CE)* (CBET 2; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1991), 86–89.

15 See, e.g., M.H. Williams, 'The Contribution of Jewish Inscriptions to the Study of Judaism,' in W. Horbury *et alii* (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. III: *The Early Roman Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 75–93, esp. 82–83.

6 Age at Death

Another major area in which the inscriptions yield data that the literary sources do not inform us about at all is the average age at death.¹⁶ Mentioning the age at death is one of the many originally non-Jewish epigraphic customs taken over by Jews from the Greeks and, especially, the Romans.¹⁷ Some twenty-five years ago, I figured out on the basis of the then available data (slightly less than 550 epitaphs that mention the age of the deceased) that the average age at death for Jews in the imperial period was 28.4 years (some 29 years for men and 27 for women). Even though the evidence has increased considerably in the meantime, these numbers need not be corrected significantly—they still remain way below 30 years. A great problem, however, is that of the representativeness of these data. With less than a thousand epitaphs mentioning an age at death over a period of some one thousand years, i.e., with data for less than one Jew every year, what do we really know?¹⁸ And apart from this problem, there are a number of distorting factors.

Firstly, there is the problem of the great unevenness of the geographical distribution: some areas yield far more data on age at death than others; moreover, in cities it was far more usual to erect tombstones with inscriptions than in the countryside. Secondly, the chronological distribution is uneven as well: The third to fifth centuries of the Common Era yield much more evidence than the preceding ones. Thirdly, there is the underrepresentation of young children and infants: Some ancient cemeteries have great numbers of tombs of infants but these have no epitaphs or only inscriptions without any indication of their age at death so that the rate of the actual infant mortality does not become visible at all. The estimate of a modern authority on the demography of the Roman Empire to the effect that less than half of those born reached the age of five seems very reasonable,¹⁹ and that would imply that the average life expectancy was even lower than is often assumed. In a calculation of the average age at death in Roman Egypt on the basis of many hundreds of papyri, Bagnall and Frier come to the conclusion that for men and women together it was between 22 and 25 years (man about 25, women some years

16 See Van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs* 73–84.

17 See, e.g., L.V. Rutgers, *The Jews of Late Ancient Rome* (RG RW 126; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 101–107.

18 On this problem see more extensively Van der Horst, 'Greek in Jewish Palestine.'

19 See A.R. Burn, *Hic brevis vivitur: A Study of the Expectation of Life in the Roman Empire, Past and Present* 4 (1953) 1–31; also his review of H. Nordberg, *Biometrical Notes* (1963) in *JRS* 55 (1965) 253–257.

less).²⁰ So possibly the low numbers in our own calculation are still too high! Fourthly, there is a serious underrepresentation of women: Even though this is much more the case in pagan than in Jewish funerary epigraphy,²¹ the percentage of Jewish women for whom the age at death is mentioned is no more than some 40 %. This is regrettable since we do know that women had a higher mortality rate than men due to death from childbirth and general exhaustion.²² So here, too, a more balanced set of data might have yielded a lower average of the age at death. This is not to deny, of course, that in antiquity Jewish men and women could and did reach high ages, even up to 100 years.

Finally, there is the problem of the unreliability of the indications of age at death: Far too many tombstones give ages ending in 0 or 5, especially for those above 20 years; after the age of 70 virtually all end in zero.²³ This is simply the result of lack of knowledge of the exact age, so these indications can hardly be trusted. Furthermore, and significantly, in pagan epitaphs one finds an incredible number of extremely old people.²⁴ We find mention of people not only of 125, but also of 140, 160, or even 170 years of age, and these are of course absurd exaggerations.²⁵ This, however, is an aspect in which Jewish grave inscriptions do definitely deviate from pagan epitaphs of the same periods. Although there is also much age-rounding in Jewish tomb inscriptions, to the best of my knowledge there are no epitaphs of which the Jewish provenance is certain and which mention people older than 120 years. Such cases of grave exaggeration do not occur. What could be the reason for this? An educated guess is that here a biblical text lurks in the background: Genesis 6:3 says that God decreed about humankind that 'their days shall be one

20 R.S. Bagnall & B.W. Frier, *The Demography of Roman Egypt* (Cambridge Studies in Population, Economy and Society in Past Time 23; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 75–110. They claim that their results are applicable to the Roman Empire as a whole, not without reason; at p. 109 they state that their calculation is 'closely comparable to that of present-day primitive societies.' Cf. also B. Frier, 'Roman Life Expectancy. The Pannonian Evidence,' *Phoenix* 37 (1983) 328–344, for similar results.

21 In some corpora of pagan epitaphs indicating age men are 20 times more numerous than women; see M. Clauss, 'Probleme der Lebensalterstatistiken aufgrund römischer Grabinschriften,' *Chiron* 3 (1973) 395–417, esp. 405–406.

22 See Burn, 'Hic breve vivitur' 10–13.

23 On this phenomenon see R.P. Duncan Jones, 'Age-Rounding, Illiteracy and Social Differentiation in the Roman Empire,' *Chiron* 7 (1977) 333–353.

24 See I. Kajanto, *On the Problem of the Average Duration of Life in the Roman Empire* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1968), esp. 19–20.

25 These exaggerations do find parallels, however, among tribes in some developing countries in our own days.

hundred twenty years.' Even though there were Jewish interpreters who argued that this limitation applied only to the generation of the Flood,²⁶ there were many others who saw it as valid for humankind in general. It is highly probable that it was the influence of this biblical verse that induced Jews to avoid any ascription of ages higher than 120 years to their deceased. So in this case the evidence teaches us, in an indirect way, how diaspora Jews were influenced by their biblical inheritance, an inheritance that lasts till the present day when Jews congratulate someone on his/her birthday with the wish '*ad me'ah we'esrim*, 'to 120 years.' All in all, however hard to handle the epigraphic evidence for age at death may be from a statistical and demographic point of view, it is the only evidence we have, and for that reason it deserves our attention.

7 Professions

Another important aspect of the inscriptions is that they reveal much more about the wide variety of occupations and professions that Jews were engaged in in the ancient world than the literary sources do. To give just an impression I list here a selection of occupations in alphabetical order:

Actor, army-reservist, artisan, athlete, baker, banker, bank-teller, blacksmith, bronze-smith, butcher, carpenter, centurion, city-councillor, civil servant, commander (military), confectioner, dealer in horse-fodder, doctor, donkey-driver, farmer, financier, general, goldsmith, greengrocer, lawyer, lime-burner, linen-merchant, metal-worker, money-lender, musician, painter, pearl-setter, perfumer, police-chief, policeman, potter, poulterer, president of the city-council, procurator, purple-dyer, rag-dealer, retailer, river-guard, sculptor, shepherd, shipper, silk-mercator, silversmith, soldier, stone-cutter, tax-collector, tax-farmer, teacher, tent-maker, trader, vine-dresser, viticulturalist, weaver, wine-merchant.²⁷

26 See P.W. van der Horst, 'His Days Shall be One Hundred and Twenty Years: Genesis 6:3 in Early Judaism and Ancient Christianity,' in his *Jews and Christians in Their Graeco-Roman Context. Selected Essays on Early Judaism, Samaritanism, Hellenism, and Christianity* (WUNT 196; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 66–70.

27 That this list contains a number of military functions may seem strange at first sight, but there is abundant evidence that Jews did indeed serve in the armies of the Greek states and the Roman Empire; see Williams, *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans* 88–89, 97.

What is noticeable in this list of some 60 professions is firstly that it covers such a wide range as far as social status is concerned; it ranges from the lowest to the highest positions on the social ladder (from rag-dealer to president of the city-council); and secondly, that there is nothing particularly Jewish about any of the occupations in which Jews were engaged. There is nothing in this list in which pagans and Christians are not also known to have been engaged.²⁸

8 Synagogues

This long list of occupations should not make us blind to the important fact that functions in the religious community, in the synagogue, are mentioned significantly more frequently in the inscriptions than secular professions. Margaret Williams rightly remarks, "Inscriptions reveal more clearly than any other type of source material the early emergence of the synagogue as the most characteristic feature of the established diasporan community and its development from simple prayer-hall into multi-purpose community centre."²⁹ And it is telling that in many inscriptions the synagogue is called 'the (most) holy synagogue' or 'the holy place' (or 'sacred precinct'),³⁰ a clear indication of the great importance of the synagogue as a religious institution. It is two inscriptions from third-century BCE Egypt that are the first secure attestations of the existence of synagogues as Jewish religious buildings (*JIGRE* 22 and 117). And it is an inscription from mid-first-century CE Jerusalem that explicitly states what the synagogue had been built for: 'for reading of the Law and instruction in (or: teaching of) the commandments' (*CIIP* I no. 9).³¹ Synagogal

²⁸ See J. Reynolds & R. Tannenbaum, *Jews and Godfearers at Aphrodisias* (Cambridge: The Cambridge Philological Society, 1987), 116–123; M.H. Williams, *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 19–26, 231–232. Chester, 'Jewish Inscriptions and Jewish Life' 404–408.

²⁹ Williams, 'The Contribution of Jewish Inscriptions' 77.

³⁰ See M. Goodman, 'Sacred Space in Diaspora Judaism,' in his *Judaism in the Roman World* (*AJEC* 66; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 219–231; F. Avemarie, 'Jüdische Diasporagemeinden in der Antike: Ihr Selbstverständnis im Spiegel der Inschriften,' in H.J. Körtner (ed.), *Kirche—Christus—Kerygma: Profil und Identität evangelischer Kirche(n)*, (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 2009), 21–61; reprinted in his *Neues Testament und früh-rabbinisches Judentum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), here 57–58, for references to inscriptions.

³¹ *Eis anagnôsin nomou kai didachên entolôn*. For bibliography of the abundant literature on this famous inscription of the *archisynagôgos* Theodotus see J.J. Price in *CIIP* I/1, pp. 55–56.

functionaries (other than rabbis [see below]) are mentioned frequently in Judaeo-Greek inscriptions, especially throughout the Roman period. That these functions are mentioned much more frequently than secular professions is indicative of their importance to the holders of these offices. It is apparently with pride that commemorative and honorary inscriptions mention that the persons concerned are (or were) *archôn* (ruler, leader of the community), *archisynagôgos* (ruler or head of the synagogue), *gerousiarchês* (president of the council of elders, also called *epistatês tôn palaion*), *grammateus* (secretary or scribe of the community), *hypêretês* (servant or attendant), *mellarchôn* (archon-elect), *patêr synagôgês* (father of the synagogue), *phrontistês* (manager, possibly the overseer of the finances), *presbyteros* (elder = member of the council of elders), *prostatês* (president or patron, a rather unclear office), *psalmôidos* (singer of psalms) etc.³² Regrettably enough, more often than not these inscriptions deny us any information about the duties and responsibilities of these offices. Neither do they tell us which offices were honorary and which were not, although I think we can be sure that the several cases of infant office holders (such as an *archisynagôgos* of three years, *JIWE* 1 53)³³ were bestowed their titles because the community wanted to honour the family of the child. This knowledge is taken for granted. Even so, this and other material does show us different kinds of synagogue organization—apparently there was great freedom in the diaspora to structure the community according to local needs. And, again, it also shows us the centrality and great importance of the synagogue in the life of individual Jews.³⁴

32 For references see Van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs* 85–101, but esp. Williams, *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans* 37–50. The fullest recent treatments are J.T. Burtchaell, *From Synagogue to Church: Public Services and Offices in the Earliest Christian Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 228–271; C. Claußen, *Versammlung, Gemeinde, Synagoge: Das hellenistisch-jüdische Umfeld der frühchristlichen Gemeinden* (SUNT 27; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 256–293; and L.I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 2000), 387–428.

33 More instances in Williams, *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans* 149.

34 It should not be forgotten that, as Levine says, ‘the single most important piece of evidence relating to the pre-70 Judaeoan synagogues generally, and Jerusalem synagogues in particular, is the Theodotos inscription’ [*CIJ* 1404 = *CIIP* 9] (Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue* 54). This is the above-mentioned inscription that states that the building was erected for the purpose of ‘reading of the Law and instruction in the commandments.’

9 Women Leaders

It may come as a surprise that some of these inscriptions mention women as leaders of the synagogue.³⁵ We find women as *archisynagôgos* or *archisynagôgissa* (*IJO* I Cre3, Sophia of Gortyn; *IJO* II 25, Theopempte of Myndos; *IJO* II 43, Rufina of Smyrna);³⁶ as *presbytera* or *presbyterissa* (*JIWE* I 59, Beronike of Venosa; *JIWE* I 62, Mannina of Venosa; *JIWE* I 72, Faustina of Venosa; *JIWE* I 163, Eulogia of Malta; *IJO* I Thr3, Rebecca of Bizye; *IJO* I Cre3, again Sophia of Gortyn; etc.); as *matêr synagôgês* (*JIWE* II 251, Simplicia of Rome; *JIWE* II 542, Marcella of Rome; *JIWE* II 577, the proselyte (!) Veturia Paula of Rome; *JIWE* II 5, Coelia Paterna of Brescia; etc.).³⁷ There are some other, minor cases of synagogal nomenclature applied to women but the selection of instances listed here suffices to indicate that women may have fulfilled roles of leadership in diaspora communities. This has been denied, however, by those scholars who see in these titles nothing but honorary designations without any real responsibilities or offices involved, possibly given these women because *their husbands* were the real functionaries. In that case, these women were not office holders at all. However, it is significant that in other cases where wives of male functionaries are mentioned, they never bear a title themselves, and we should also bear in mind that, 'if the title were merely honorific for women, we should expect a considerably greater number to be attested.'³⁸ So even when the use of synagogal functions as honorary titles is attested (after Roman models), as

35 See B.J. Brooten, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982). See the discussion of this epigraphic material in R.S. Kraemer, *Her Share of the Blessings: Women's Religions Among Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greco-Roman World* (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 106–127. For new material published after Brooten's 1982 book see M.H. Williams, 'The Epigraphy of the Jewish Diaspora since the Publication of Schürer III (1986),' *Bulletin of Judaeo-Greek Studies* 35 (2004–2005) 30. For criticism of Brooten see W. Horbury, 'Women in the Synagogue,' in Horbury et al. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism, vol. 3: The Early Roman Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 358–401. I have not seen C. Duncan, 'Inscribing Authority: Female Title Bearers in Jewish Inscriptions,' *Religions* 3/1 (2012) 37–49. Note that one finds these inscriptions only in the Greek diaspora, not in Jewish Palestine.

36 If *archêgissa* is an abbreviation of *archisynagôgissa*, as suggested by N.R.M. de Lange ('A Gold Votive Medaillon in the Jewish Museum, London,' *Zutot* 1 [2001] 52–53), Peristeria of Phthiotic Thebes (*IJO* I Ach18) would be another candidate.

37 It should be noted that the function of mother of the synagogue may be implied also in those cases where deceased women are called just 'mother.'

38 G.H.R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* 4 (1987) 219.

is certainly the case in those instances in which very young infants receive synagogal titles,³⁹ this does not exclude the possibility that in non-rabbinic synagogues of the Western diaspora, women had more opportunities to climb the social ladder in their communities than was possible elsewhere, especially in Palestine. However, the fact that there are some cases of women called *hierissa* or *hiereia* (priestess) makes this less than certain. This title most probably indicated no more (and no less) than great ancestral distinction of rank, the more so since one of these women is from pre-70 Jerusalem, and one cannot possibly imagine a woman serving as priest in the Jerusalem temple. She almost certainly was what later rabbis called a *koheneth*, that is, a priest's wife or daughter.⁴⁰ And, as William Horbury has argued forcefully, it was most probably their financial support of the communities which earned them these titles. "Women office-holders in the synagogues would then have been primarily benefactresses."⁴¹ Even so, again it is only the inscriptions that inform us about this matter.

10 Women as Proselytes and Godfearers

Proselytes are not mentioned frequently in the inscriptions, which is to be expected since Judaism has never been a missionary religion.⁴² We have some 20 instances ranging from the first century BCE to the fifth century CE, and half of these are women.⁴³ Also some 80 % of the Godfearers in the inscriptions are women. This is striking in view of the fact that women are underrepresented in the epigraphic material. Apart from that, we may also surmise that proselytes are underrepresented in the epigraphic record since during the greatest part

39 See, e.g., the case of the *nēpios archisynagōgos* of three years in Venosa (*JWE* I 53) and the 12-year-old *grammateus* in Rome (*JWE* II 547). Cf. the Roman *archōn nēpios* in *JWE* II 337. Other instances and discussion in Williams, *The Jews among Greeks and Romans* 149. On the Graeco-Roman models see M. Kleywegt, *Ancient Youth: The Ambiguity of Youth and the Absence of Adolescence in Greco-Roman Society* (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1991), 247–272.

40 See M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York: Pardes Publishing House, 1950 = 1903), 615.

41 Horbury, 'Women in the Synagogue' 390.

42 See M. Goodman, *Mission and Conversion: Proselytizing in the Religious History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); also his 'Jewish Proselytizing in the First Century,' in his *Judaism in the Roman World* (*AJEC* 66; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 91–116.

43 See I. Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting, vol. 5: Diaspora Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans & Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996), 25, for references.

of the imperial period, from Hadrian onwards, conversion to Judaism was regarded as a capital crime, which certainly did not encourage people to divulge such a conversion, not even on a tombstone. And we should also keep in mind that 20 instances of proselytes are from a statistical point of view too few to base any firm conclusions upon. Be that as it may, it would seem that the relatively high number of women is in agreement with the fact that in literary sources (in Josephus, the New Testament, and elsewhere) we are told several times that it was especially pagan women who were attracted to Judaism (see, e.g., Acts 13:50; 16:13–14; 17:4–6), although these probably were rather Godfearers than proselytes.

11 Epithets Referring to the Torah

Attachment to the synagogue and the Jewish community with its value system, which was based upon the Torah, is also apparent from some telling epithets that several of the deceased are adorned with in their epitaphs.⁴⁴ We find designations which are very unusual or even non-existent in the non-Jewish ancient world, such as *philosynagôgos* (loving the synagogue/community, *JIWE* II 271 [Rome]), *philonomos* (loving the Torah, *JIWE* II 212, 502 [Rome]), *philentol(i)os* (loving the commandments, *JIWE* I 163 [Malta]; *JIWE* II 240,⁴⁵ 281, 564, 576 [Rome and of unknown provenance]), *philopenês* (loving the poor, *JIWE* II 240 [Rome]), *philogeitôn* (loving the neighbours, *JIGRE* 84 [Leontopolis]); et al. It is also noteworthy that the daughter of a Roman ‘father of the synagogue,’ Catia Ammias, is said to ‘have lived a good life in Judaism’ or to ‘have lived a good Jewish life’ (*kalôs biôsasa en tõi Ioudaïsmôi*, in *JIWE* II 584). In *IJO* I Mac1 (Stobi, Macedonia), Claudius Tiberius Polycharmus, father of the synagogue at Stobi, proudly states that he “lived all [his] life according to [the prescriptions of] Judaism” (*politeusamenos pasan tên politeian kata ton Ioudaïsmôn*). These epithets and statements reveal a strong sense of Jewish identity and of attachment to the Jewish tradition on the part of diaspora Jews. It is also clear from this (and other) evidence that the Torah had taken center stage in the world of these Jews. The centrality of the Torah “is something about which the epigraphic record

44 The most frequently occurring epithet is *hosios* (pious), one of the LXX renderings of *chasid*; it does not occur in pagan or Christian epitaphs.

45 In this remarkable epitaph, the deceased, the *archôn* Priscus, is said to have been *philolaos*, *philentolos*, *philopenês*. Cf. *JIWE* II 576. Note that Philentolios and Philonomios were also used as proper names.

leaves us in no doubt.”⁴⁶ It is not only epithets such as *philonomos* and *philentolos* that highlight this but also the occurrence (or rather: the proud mention) in epitaphs of synagogal functions such as *nomodidaskalos* (teacher of the Torah), *didaskalos nomomathês* (teacher and scholar of the Torah), *mathêtês sophôn* (student of the Sages) and the frequent depiction of the Torah shrine on tombstones that make this abundantly clear.⁴⁷

12 Non-Rabbinic Judaism

In view of all this, another aspect of Jewish life on which the epigraphic evidence sheds light is all the more striking, namely, the *non*-rabbinic nature of diaspora Judaism in the period under consideration. The inscriptions strongly suggest that by and large diaspora communities remained outside the sphere of influence of the rabbis till the early Middle Ages. To be sure, there are some 60 inscriptions that do mention ‘rabbis’ but the vast majority (more than 50) are from Palestine and, moreover, it is far from certain whether the persons designated *rabbi* were rabbis in the technical sense of ordained community leaders.⁴⁸ In the first place, in antiquity the term *rabbi* was applied to anyone of high standing in the community and hence very often had the meaning of ‘important person.’⁴⁹ Secondly, it is the inscriptions themselves that make clear that the real community leaders were the *archontes*, the *archisynagôgoi*, the *gerousiarchai* etc. ‘Rabbis’ mentioned in inscriptions appear almost always as donors, not as leaders of the synagogue, and it makes no sense to assume that all ‘epigraphical rabbis’ in antiquity were Talmudic scholars.⁵⁰ Even if some of the very few ‘rabbis’ mentioned in diaspora Jewish inscriptions may perhaps have been rabbis in our sense of the word,⁵¹ it is clear that the term ‘rabbinic Judaism’ would be totally out of place as a characterization of the many Jewish

46 M.H. Williams, ‘The Contribution of Jewish Inscriptions to the Study of Judaism,’ in W. Horbury et al. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 3: *The Early Roman Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 83.

47 References in Williams, ‘The Contribution of Jewish Inscriptions’ 83.

48 See S.J.D. Cohen, ‘Epigraphical Rabbis,’ *JQR* 72 (1981/82) 1–17.

49 See L.I. Levine, *The Rabbinic Class of Roman Palestine in Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak ben-Zvi—New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1989), 15.

50 Thus rightly Cohen, ‘Epigraphical Rabbis’ 14. Also Williams, ‘The Contribution of Jewish Inscriptions’ 80.

51 E.g., *JWE* I 22 (Brusciano, 4th–5th cent.), 36 (Naples, 5th–6th cent.?), 86 (Venosa, 6th cent.), 186 (Tarragona, 5th–6th cent.?).

communities in the western diaspora. These communities often flourished for centuries without any rabbis being around, let alone leading the communities. That also explains why there are no inscriptions outside Palestine that reflect any specifically rabbinic ideas or practices.⁵² This is in such a marked contrast to the eastern Aramaic-speaking diaspora that some scholars speak of a split diaspora, a Semitic-speaking diaspora that was dominated by rabbis in the East and a non-rabbinic Greek-speaking diaspora in the West.⁵³ Be that as it may, recent attempts to demonstrate that soon after 70 CE also the Western diaspora came under rabbinic sway are in my view utterly unconvincing.⁵⁴ The vast majority of the Jews in the Roman Empire never saw a rabbi and never heard of the Talmud.

13 Manumission of Slaves

A further aspect that deserves our attention is that it is only through epigraphical evidence that we learn about release rituals (manumissions) of Jewish slaves. This evidence mainly comes from Delphi and the Bosporan Kingdom.⁵⁵ For instance, from a second-century BCE inscription found at Delphi we learn that the slave, ‘*Ioudaios* by name, *Ioudaios* by race,’⁵⁶ was sold to the god Apollo (!, *IJO* I Ach42), a not uncommon manumission procedure at the time among Greeks (see also Ach43 and 44). Even though the involvement of Apollo was probably at the initiative of the manumittor, it is revealing to read in another

52 The exceptional mention of the Jewish festivals of Pesach and of Shavuot in *IJO* II 196 (Phrygian Hierapolis) is of course no exception to that rule.

53 See A. Edrei & D. Mendels, ‘A Split Jewish Diaspora: Its Dramatic Consequences,’ *JSP* 16 (2007) 91–137 and 17 (2008) 163–187; also D. Mendels & A. Edrei, *Zweierlei Diaspora: Zur Spaltung der antiken jüdischen Welt* (Toldot 8; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010).

54 See A. Collar, *Religious Networks in the Roman Empire: The Spread of New Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 146–223. She bases her theory of the rabbinic nature of the Western diaspora (partly inspired by L.H. Feldman’s *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* [1993]) on the epigraphic evidence, but she heavily overinterprets it.

55 The relevant material can be found in *IJO* I Ach42–45, BS5–9, 17–25; see also E.L. Gibson, *The Jewish Manumission Inscriptions of the Bosporus Kingdom* (TSAJ 75; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999). In the Indices of *IJO* I (at pp. 392–394) one finds a very useful and complete survey of the terms and conditions of manumission of Jewish slaves.

56 For *Ioudaios* as both a name and an ethnic label see M.H. Williams, ‘The Meaning and Function of *Ioudaios* in Graeco-Roman Inscriptions,’ *ZPE* 116 (1997) 249–262; now reprinted in her *Jews in a Graeco-Roman Environment* 267–288. Slaves often got ethnic personal names.

inscription that the liberated slave, Moschus, who is explicitly identified as a Jew, set up a stêlê on which he states that he had a dream in which the Greek gods Amphiaraus and Hygieia ordered him to record his manumission on the stone and set it up by their altar (Ach45, 3rd cent. BCE). This sheds a striking light on the degree of assimilation that was possible among Jewish slaves of pagan owners. In the Bosporan inscriptions (most of them from the first cent. CE) we find that Jewish slaves were set free in the prayer-house (*proseuchê* = synagogue) and that the community of the Jews (*synagôgê tôn Ioudaiôn*) provided guardianship (e.g., IJO 1 BS5–7).⁵⁷ This final remark means that ‘the synagogue is bound to uphold the contract between owner and now freed slave.’⁵⁸ Some other Bosporan manumissions, however, state that the Jewish slaves were set free ‘under [the gods] Zeus, Gê, and Helios’ (IJO 1 BS20, 22), a common pagan Greek juridical formula, even though the transaction took place in the synagogue.⁵⁹ Whether the Jewish participants attached much significance to such formulae may be doubted, as it may in the case of the many instances of the Latin formula *dis manibus* (*DM*), ‘to the gods of the netherworld,’ on so many tombstones in the Jewish catacombs of Rome.

We just saw that the word *proseuchê* (litt. ‘prayer,’ shorthand for ‘place of prayer’) was used for the synagogue building. This was the usual term in the Hellenistic period. From the first century CE onwards it gradually begins to be replaced by *synagôgê* (assembly or place of assembly). “Th[is] change reflects a major development in the synagogue’s role: from serving primarily as a prayer-house, it has become the place where people gather together for a variety of purposes, religious, educational, administrative, juridical and social.”⁶⁰ Other epigraphical terminology used to designate the synagogue—the sacred place, the holy precinct, the *sabbateion*, the *Hebraïkê*, etc—has to be left out of account here (some of this will be discussed below in Appendix 3: A Selection of Inscriptions).

57 It is somewhat confusing that the editors of *IJO 1* use the abbreviation BS for Black Sea while BS is also the current shorthand for the Beth She’arim inscriptions.

58 Gibson, *The Jewish Manumission Inscriptions* 150.

59 See M.H. Williams, *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans: A Diaspora Sourcebook* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 123; Gibson, *The Jewish Manumission Inscriptions* 119–121.

60 M.H. Williams, ‘The Contribution of Jewish Inscriptions to the Study of Judaism,’ in W. Horbury et al. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 3: *The Early Roman Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 77. For the variety of the functions of the synagogue building see esp. L.I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven—London: Yale University Press, 2000), 124–159.

14 Pagan Donors

Again another area that Jewish literary sources are silent about is that of pagan donors of synagogues. The best known example is mentioned in the New Testament. In his Gospel, Luke tells about a Roman centurion in Capernaum. The Jews of the town urge Jesus to help the man by healing his beloved slave, saying: 'He is worthy to have you do this for him, for he loves our people and it is he who built our synagogue for us' (7:4–5). We also have epigraphical corroboration of this phenomenon. It is an inscription from Acmonia in Phrygia in which it is said that the 'house' built by Julia Severa was restored by some prominent members of the local Jewish community who were honoured for that by the synagogue (1JO II 168).⁶¹ Julia Severa happens to be well-known to us. In the middle of the first century CE she was priestess of the local emperor cult. So she was not Jewish but played a prominent role in a pagan cult of the city. Even so, this inscription testifies to her interest in and sympathy for the Jewish community: she had its synagogue built at her own cost. Julia Severa was a woman from an aristocratic family (her son later became a senator in Rome), a lady who had close ties to members of the distinguished Roman family of the Turronii: one of them, Turrionius Rapo, was a priest of the emperor cult as well and he is mentioned together with Julia Severa on coins of the city; but another member of that family, Turrionius Cladus, is mentioned in our inscription as the 'head of the synagogue' (*archisynagôgos*) who saw to it that the restoration was carried out properly.⁶² So he must have been a proselyte. The fact that here a socially very prominent woman from a distinguished family with an explicitly pagan role in the city makes such a generous gesture towards the Jewish community bespeaks a very successful integration of the Acmonian Jews and of the sympathy they had won with the non-Jewish inhabitants of that city.⁶³ Here a single inscription provides us with a unique insight into gentile-Jewish relations in first-century CE Asia Minor (as does the great donor inscription from Aphrodisias [1JO II 14] for a later period; see the previous chapter).

61 See also B. Lifshitz, *Donateurs et fondateurs dans les synagogues juives* (Paris: Gabalda, 1967), 34–36 (no. 33).

62 See S. Mitchell, *Anatolia. Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 9.

63 For other instances see L.H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 310.

15 Scriptural Quotations

Contrary to what we find in Christian epitaphs, biblical quotes in Jewish inscriptions are few and far between, but they do yield important information about the ongoing use of the various Greek Bible translations in the ancient diaspora.⁶⁴ The most often quoted biblical text is Prov. 10:7, 'May the memory of the righteous one be (for) a blessing.'⁶⁵ It is quoted only rarely in Hebrew but more frequently in both the Greek version of the LXX or in the translation of Aquila, sometimes in a mixed form of both (occasionally in Latin).⁶⁶ The importance of this observation is that it enables us to see that in some Jewish communities the LXX was not discarded when Aquila's version had become available, as is so often mistakenly assumed. A variety of Greek Bible versions remained in use, not only in antiquity but also in the medieval period.⁶⁷ This use also indicates that most probably these communities held their synagogal services in Greek (as was also the case in some areas of Palestine).⁶⁸

16 Afterlife

Finally, some brief remarks on expressions of belief in the afterlife in epitaphs are in order.⁶⁹ Unfortunately, the vast majority of tomb inscriptions are

64 See S. Cappelletti, 'Biblical Quotations in the Greek Jewish Inscriptions of the Diaspora,' in N.R.M. de Lange, J.G. Krivoruchko & C. Boyd-Taylor (eds.), *Jewish Reception of Greek Bible Versions* (TSMJ 23; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 128–141 (limited to only one biblical quote); also P.W. van der Horst, 'Biblical Quotations in Judaeo-Greek Inscriptions,' in B.J. Koet, S. Moyise & J. Verheyden (eds.), *The Scriptures of Israel in Jewish and Christian Tradition: Essays in Honour of Maarten J.J. Menken* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 148; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 363–376, now reprinted in my *Studies in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* 66–79.

65 The second biblical text in frequency is 1Sam. 25:29, 'May the soul of my lord be bound in the bundle of life.' This has become, in various forms, the standard text on numerous Jewish tombstones in medieval and modern times.

66 See, e.g., *JWE* I 120, 122, 131, 133, 137; *JWE* II 112, 276, 307; *IJO* I Cre3.

67 This is the purport of various contributions to the volume edited by Nicholas de Lange (see note 64). See also T. Rajak, *Translation and Survival: The Greek Bible of the Ancient Jewish Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 305–306.

68 On synagogue services in Greek see Van der Horst, 'Greek in Jewish Palestine' 19.

69 See U. Fischer, *Eschatologie und Jenseitserwartung im hellenistischen Diasporajudentum* (BZNW 44; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1978), 215–254; Van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs* 114–126; J.S. Park, *Conceptions of Afterlife in Jewish Inscriptions* (WUNT 11 121; Tübingen:

disappointingly silent about such a belief.⁷⁰ Those that do yield information about some forms of belief in life after death, however, show us a great variety of ideas. The Jewish literary sources from the Hellenistic and Roman period sometimes create the impression that most Jews believed in either the resurrection of the body or the immortality of the soul (or related concepts such as astral immortality⁷¹), but the inscriptions clearly demonstrate that in that period many Jews still stuck to the pessimistic image that the Hebrew Bible pictures of humans' fate after death, that of a somber 'life' in a gloomy netherworld (*She'ol*). Sometimes one finds a downright denial of afterlife reminiscent of what we know about the Sadducees.⁷² On the other hand, the large number of epitaphs from Beth She'arim containing the formula *eumoirei* ('may your lot be good'⁷³) are probably best interpreted as indicating a belief in life after death. Also the many inscriptions (especially from Rome) in which the deceased's relatives wish that 'his/her sleep may be in peace' are open to an eschatological interpretation, although that is a much debated issue.⁷⁴ But there is less than a handful of inscriptions that do explicitly state that resurrection of the body was what one hoped for or believed in.⁷⁵ It is a paradoxical fact that this most typical of Jewish beliefs finds its clearest expression in one of the most atypical Jewish epitaphs from antiquity, namely in a Latin poem of 13 hexameters from third or fourth century CE Rome (*JIVE* II 103). It is a moving poem that deserves to be quoted in full:

Mohr Siebeck, 2000); L.V. Rutgers, 'Death and Afterlife: The Inscriptional Evidence,' in J. Neusner, A. Avery-Peck, B. Chilton (eds.), *Judaism in Late Antiquity*, vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 293–310.

70 For instance, '97% of the roughly six hundred Jewish funerary inscriptions from Rome does not refer to the afterlife' (Rutgers, 'Death and Afterlife' 297). See also Williams, 'The Contribution of Jewish Inscriptions' 90–91. For a contrary opinion (inspired by J.-B. Frey) see B. Lifshitz, 'La vie de l'au-delà dans les conceptions juives. Inscriptions grecques de Beth She'arim,' *RB* 68 (1961) 401–411, who overinterprets the evidence rather wishfully.

71 For an epigraphic instance of astral immortality see, e.g., *IJO* II 236.

72 See on these cases esp. Ch. 3 in Park, *Conceptions of Afterlife*. At p. 202 Park concludes that "it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that roughly between 200 B.C. and A.D. 400, a significant number of people who considered themselves to be Jews either denied, or held to a minimal conception of, afterlife."

73 'Lot' reminds one of the use of Hebrew *cheleq* for a blessed afterlife (e.g., m.*Sanhedrin* 10.1).

74 M. Ogle, 'The Sleep of Death,' *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 11 (1933) 81–117.

75 See *JIVE* II 103; *BS* II 162, 194.

Here is buried Regina, covered by such a tomb,
 which her husband set up in accordance to his love for her.
 After twice ten (years), she spent with him a year
 and a fourth month with eight days more.
 She will live again, return to the light again.
 For she can hope that she may rise into the life
 promised for both the worthy and the pious, a true pledge,
 she who deserved to have an abode in the venerable land.
 Your piety has achieved this for you, your chaste life,
 your love for your people, your observance of the Law,
 the merit of your marriage, whose honour was your concern.
 From these deeds there is future hope for you,
 And therein your grieving spouse seeks his consolation.⁷⁶

Even though it will always remain impossible to say how representative the beliefs expressed in these inscriptions are for the Jewish people as a whole, there can be little doubt that here, too, we can see at least that a wide variety of ideas about and attitudes toward life after death continued to be a feature of Judaism till the end of antiquity (and even later).

17 **Judaeo-Greek Culture after 70 CE**

Perhaps the most important aspect of the study of Jewish inscriptions in Greek is that they reveal to us a world of Judaeo-Greek culture that we would not know otherwise. Many scholars tend to think that the various forms of Judaeo-Greek cultural synthesis that came into being and flourished in the centuries between 300 BCE and 100 CE, disappeared completely after the first century. It is for that reason, so it is assumed, that we do not know any Jewish literature in Greek after Josephus: Jews simply stopped writing in Greek by the end of the first century CE and apparently chose to express their Judaism in the Hebrew and Aramaic of the rabbinic literature. As Martin Goodman has rightly emphasized, this assumption 'is contradicted by the thousands of Greek inscriptions set up by Mediterranean Jews between the second and sixth centuries CE.'⁷⁷ Why Judaeo-Greek literature from these later centuries was not preserved by

⁷⁶ Translation by Noy in *JJWE* 11, p. 86 (slightly modified). See for some notes on this text Appendix 3 below, no. 35.

⁷⁷ M. Goodman, 'Under the Influence: Hellenism in Ancient Jewish Life,' *BAR* 36, 1 (2010) 67.

the Jews is a much debated matter that cannot be dealt with here.⁷⁸ In this connection it is important, however, to stress the major difference between the Eastern and Western diasporas. The linguistic divide between the two (a Semitic speaking diaspora in the East, a Greek speaking one in the West) had dramatic consequences.⁷⁹ It is not only the fact that the rabbis handed down their halakhah in an oral form for a long time but also and especially the fact that, once these traditions were finally written down, they never took the trouble to translate their Mishnah, their Talmudim, and their midrashim into Greek (let alone Latin) that prevented them from gaining influence in the Western diaspora. The language gap was not bridged and the consequence was that the rabbis thus lost half of their constituency. Jewish communities in the West, isolated as they were from the rabbinic network, could not contribute anything to the development of halakhah in the East. This situation changed only in the Middle Ages when, around the ninth century, the rabbinic movement arrived in Greek and Latin Europe. As has already been said, since we do not have Judaeo-Greek literature that was written after the first century CE, and since the Jewish literature we do have from that period (*scil.*, rabbinic writings) does not inform us about the Western diaspora, it is again only epigraphy (and, of course, archaeology) that allows us glimpses into the rich non-rabbinic Jewish culture of this diaspora.

18 Conclusion

To conclude, what we learn from ancient Jewish inscriptions is, *inter multa alia*, that there was a huge, mainly Greek-speaking diaspora in the West, not dominated by rabbis, with a flourishing culture, reading their Bible in one of the available Greek versions, in varying degrees of acculturation but often quite well integrated in Graeco-Roman society, with a characteristic onomastic tradition, with religious communities where at some places women possibly had greater opportunities to have a leadership role than elsewhere, but with as high an infant mortality as everywhere else in the Roman Empire. In short, better

78 Goodman, *ibid.* 84, suggests that the loss of this literature is due to the lack of interest on the part of the rabbis who wanted to preserve only writings in Hebrew and Aramaic (and, I would add, only writings that conformed to, and confirmed, their own ideas). 'What they did not need to know they allowed to lapse into oblivion,' says Tessa Rajak, *Translation and Survival* 6.

79 See Edrei & Mendels, 'A Split Jewish Diaspora: Its Dramatic Consequences' and Mendels & Edrei, *Zweierlei Diaspora: Zur Spaltung der antiken jüdischen Welt*.

than the literary sources, inscriptions bring before our eyes the extraordinary diversity of Jewish life and thought in late antiquity.

Much more could and should be said about our important subject.⁸⁰ The present author hopes, however, that the small selection of evidence presented here suffices to make clear that ancient Jewish epigraphy is a highly relevant area of research in the study of early Judaism.

80 But, as Margaret Williams rightly remarks, '[o]n the deficit side, we may note the limited contribution epigraphy makes to our understanding of the beliefs and practices of non-affluent Jews' ('The Contribution of Jewish Inscriptions to the Study of Judaism' 92).

The Ossuary of James, the Brother of Jesus

1 Introduction

The present chapter consists of three parts which originally were three articles written at different times. The first part was written (in Dutch¹) at the end of 2002, shortly after the discovery of the ossuary (bone box) that is the subject of this contribution. The second part was written a year later, when the controversy about this bone box was at its zenith.² The final part was written in 2012, when the whole affair had come to a (provisional) dénouement.³ In the present contribution, the reader will find a slightly abridged and adapted English translation of these three contributions.

I

1.1 *The Spectacular Start*

In October 2002, an article in the popular American journal *Biblical Archaeology Review* [hereafter BAR] had such an impact that it made the front pages of many daily newspapers. In the Netherlands, even the TV newscast paid attention to it (Oct. 22). The news, presented as a sensational discovery, was that the ossuary of James, the brother of Jesus, had been discovered. In the article in BAR, a famous French epigrapher, André Lemaire, published the *editio princeps* of the inscription on this ossuary.⁴ Ossuaries are a kind of mini-sarcophagus measuring between 50 and 70 cm,⁵ usually of limestone, in which the bones of the deceased are deposited a year after the burial (there is no certainty about the background of this custom [*ossilegium*], although probably

1 'Het grafschrift van Jakobus, de broer van Jezus?', *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 57 (2003) 1–9.

2 'Nogmaals: het grafschrift van Jakobus, de broer van Jezus', *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 58 (2004) 18–27.

3 'Voor de laatste maal: Het ossuarium van Jakobus', *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 66 (2012) 150–152.

4 A. Lemaire, 'Burial Box of the Brother of Jesus,' *BAR* 28,6 (Nov.–Dec. 2002) 24–33.

5 This new ossuary measures ca. 50 (l) × 30 (h) × 25 (b) cm.

it has to do with ideas about life after death).⁶ The number of reactions to this publication worldwide was staggeringly high, and inevitably there was much nonsense among these reactions. Let us then have a sober look at the facts.

1.2 *The Inscription*

The Aramaic inscription on the ossuary states that it belongs to:

יעקוב בר יוסף אחי דישוע
Ya'aqov bar Yoseph 'achuy de-Yeshua'
 Jacob [= James], son of Josef, brother of Jesus.

Before we proceed to discuss the relevance and significance of this inscription, let us first briefly pay attention to the problems of the provenance, the dating, and the authenticity of the ossuary and its inscription. To start with the provenance, unfortunately, it is uncertain where exactly the ossuary was found. It was not a find in a regular and official excavation, but it turned up in the shop of an Arab antiquities dealer in Jerusalem. It was offered for sale some 40 years ago by the Palestinian dealer to an Israeli private collector, Oded Golan, a business man from Tel Aviv, who bought the object for a couple of hundred dollars without realizing at all its potential importance. The only thing the buyer learned about the provenance of the artefact was that it came from Silwan (ancient Siloam), an Arab residential quarter to the south of the old city of Jerusalem, where indeed many ancient graves can be found. It is of course highly annoying—and from an archaeological point of view a very serious drawback—that the artefact cannot be studied *in situ* because the archaeological context always yields important indications for the interpretation of the find. But theft and robbery of archaeological objects as well as secret and illegal excavations have always been an accompaniment of scientific archaeology and most unfortunately it is still a rampant phenomenon. However, the fact that in the case under discussion the origin of the ossuary is uncertain does not relieve us from the obligation of trying to find out whether it could be authentic and what its relevance could be. A recent historian of antiquity and epigrapher soberly remarked recently, “Even though the epitaph should ideally be

6 See E.M. Meyers, *Jewish Ossuaries: Reburial and Rebirth* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1971). M. Avi-Yonah, ‘Ossuaries and Sarcophagi,’ *EncJud* 12 (1971) 1503–1506; B.R. McCane, ‘Ossuaries,’ *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010) 1009–1011 (there more lit.).

interpreted within its archaeological context, that often turns out to be impossible.”⁷

It seems very likely that the ossuary has its provenance in Jerusalem since by far most of the ossuaries known to us are from that city and its immediate surroundings.⁸ Even though the use of ossuaries spread to Galilee and some other parts of Roman Palestine, the phenomenon remained an exception in those areas in contrast to Jerusalem or its surroundings (Jericho included). Provenance of this new ossuary from Jerusalem or its close surroundings is for that reason more than probable.

However, could it not be a modern forgery? That cannot be excluded. In the past, sensationalism frequently induced people to forge inscriptions and artifacts (forgeries, by the way, which were quite often unmasked).⁹ Especially in a case such as the present one the possibility that it is a fake should be taken seriously and the ossuary should be carefully investigated in search of any possible traces of forgery. That is exactly what has been done in this case. Whether an inscription is a modern forgery can often best be judged on the basis of the nature of the letter groove. An expert can see from that groove whether the letters have been incised with a modern chisel (or another sharp tool) or with an ancient piece of equipment. Experts of the Geological Survey of Israel (GSI) have thoroughly investigated the ossuary but were not able to find any trace of modern tooling.¹⁰ “No evidence that might detract from the authenticity of the patina and the inscription was found.” They also could establish that the patina (an oxydation layer that is formed in the course of

7 R.P. Saller, ‘The Family and Society,’ in J. Bodel (ed.), *Epigraphic Evidence. Ancient History From Inscriptions* (London—New York: Routledge, 2001), 97.

8 R. Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology in the Land of Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 89–119. L.Y. Rahmani, *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries in the Collections of the State of Israel* (Jerusalem: The Israel Antiquities Authority & The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994), 21–25, 302–307.

9 On forged inscriptions see M.P. Billanovich, ‘Falsi epigrafici,’ *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 10 (1967) 25–110; J. Bodel, ‘Epigraphy and the Ancient Historian,’ in *idem* (ed.), *Epigraphic Evidence* (see note 7) 48–49; more lit. in F. Bérard e.a., *Guide de l’épigraphiste* (3rd ed.; Paris: Éditions Rue d’Ulm, 2000), 200 (cf. *ibid.* p. 89 on the famous but highly controversial inscription on the *fibula Praenestina*). On forged artifacts see O.W. Muscarella, *The Lie Became Great: The Forgery of Ancient Near Eastern Culture* (Groningen: Styx, 2000). By far most of the forged inscriptions are in Latin.

10 The report by these experts has been incorporated into Lemaire’s article with the *editio princeps* in BAR. The following quote in the text is from p. 30. The suggestion raised by some scholars that the inscription could have been incised with modern electrical equipment thus turns out to be unfounded.

centuries) on the stone was ancient. These experts explained the fact that this patina was not found in all letters of the inscription by assuming that some of the letters had been cleaned in recent times, not by assuming that these letters had been carved recently. As a matter of fact, it is in some letters of the words 'Jacob, son of Josef' that the patina was no longer present, *not* in letters of the words 'brother of Jesus,' as one would expect if these words were a later forgery.

Another point is that, if the final words ('brother of Jesus') were a later Christian addition to the original text, one would not expect such a sober and matter of fact wording but rather formulations known from the New Testament such as 'brother of the Lord' (and a reference to Mary rather than to Joseph). The theory that the words 'brother of Jesus' were a later addition is supposed by some scholars to be supported by the fact that the words 'James, son of Joseph' are carved in a rather formal lettering whereas in the second half of the inscription some of the letters (the *aleph* and *dalet* in *achuy de-*) are of a more cursive type. But an argument against that is that the other letters in 'brother of Jesus' are in the formal style as well and that the writing of the two 'cursive' letters can simply be explained by the fact that exactly on those two spots the surface of the stone, which is of a bad quality, is so uneven that a formal letter type was impossible to realize there.¹¹ Those who have made assertions to the contrary on the internet and in newspapers have so far not been able to scrutinize the stone and its inscription personally. So their judgement has little value.

Also the argument that the inscription must be a hoax because Joseph is here mentioned as the father of James and Jesus, is untenable,¹² This argument runs as follows: Joseph as father of Jesus and James turns up only in the later Gospels (not in that of the earlier Mark, ca. 70 CE), so that tradition could not yet be known by 62 (the year of James's death). However, in favour of an earlier dating of this tradition is the fact that Matthew and Luke not only mention Joseph as Jesus' father independently of each other, which proves that they draw upon an earlier tradition, but also that actually Joseph as father of Jesus does not fit in at all with their stories about the virginal conception of Jesus, in which Joseph is in fact a 'Fremdkörper' that could better be left out. One does not

11 The present author was able to see this by autopsy in Toronto, where in November 2002 the ossuary was exhibited for a short period in the Royal Ontario Museum on the occasion of the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature.

12 Thus H.J. de Jonge in the Dutch newspaper *Trouw* of Oct. 26, 2002. It is regrettable that De Jonge bases his argument on the opinion of people who have not seen the ossuary themselves instead of on the investigation by the Geological Survey of Israel.

invent a father with name and all if one wants to argue that in reality Jesus had no human father at all. The tradition about Joseph as Jesus' father is, therefore, a rather old tradition, at any rate older than the stories about the virgin birth. The fact that Mark does not mention Joseph is not a counter-argument at all. So we must conclude, at least for the moment, that there aren't any decisive arguments against the authenticity of the new find. But of course this situation could change.

As to the dating of the artefact, the use of ossuaries in Jerusalem and its environments is chronologically limited to the period between ca. 20 BCE and 70 CE. Perhaps it is not coincidental that this is exactly the period in which king Herod the Great and his successors rebuilt the temple, which stimulated a significant flourishing of the stone industry around Jerusalem. Elsewhere in ancient Palestine this custom persisted for some one-and-a-half centuries but only on a very limited scale. If the ossuary does indeed pertain to Jesus' brother James (on which see more below), then it is chronologically a perfect fit. The Jewish historian Josephus tells us that in the year 62 James was murdered in Jerusalem at the command of the high priest Annas (*Antiquitates Judaicae* 20:200–202).¹³ The ossuary would then be made in 63, which neatly falls within the chronological limits mentioned above. But that is not all.

The editor of the inscription, the French epigraphist André Lemaire, regards the style of writing and the shape of the Aramaic letters on the ossuary as typical of the first century of our era. That might of course be 'wishful interpretation,' for if one eagerly wants this inscription to be the one of Jesus' brother James, then the inclination to explain away anything that pleads against a dating of the inscription in the first century, is stronger than when the researcher is disinterested. But Jewish scholars from Jerusalem,¹⁴ who were far from having a personal interest in the matter, positively confirm Lemaire's dating. The lettering type fully agrees with that of other Aramaic ossuary inscriptions from the middle of the first century CE.¹⁵ For those who have seen much of this material with their own eyes there is no doubt about it.

If we now assume, on the basis of these reasonably convincing arguments, that here we have indeed an ossuary from pre-70 Jerusalem and that its

13 See S. Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992), 175–181. Josephus calls James 'the brother of Jesus who is called the Christ,' which proves that James was known as such also outside Christian circles.

14 First and foremost the renowned epigrapher Ada Yardeni.

15 Hundreds of instances of this letter type can be seen on the 135 Plates in Rahmani, *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries in the Collections of the State of Israel*.

inscription was incised in the same period, how certain then can we be that the text on the ossuary refers to the biblical James, whose father was Joseph and whose brother was Jesus of Nazareth? To begin with, it is good to be aware of the fact that these three names were very common in Jewish Palestine in the first century CE. Fortunately we now have the recently published work by Tal Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity, Part 1: Palestine 330 BCE–200 CE*.¹⁶ In the first volume we find in alphabetical order and arranged per language all personal names (and the persons who bore them) from Jewish Palestine in the period from Alexander the Great to Jehudah ha-Nasi. Even a quick glance suffices to see how frequently these three names occur. Ilan counts no less than 45 persons with the name Jacob (James), 103 with the name Jesus, and 544 with the name Joseph. Over a period of more than five centuries these numbers may seem to be very small, but we should not forget that we know only a minimal fraction of all Jews in that period by name and, moreover, that of the ca. 2500 male persons mentioned in that lexicon almost 700 bore one of these three names, that is some 28%! That implies that it is conceivable that in the first six decades of the first century in Jerusalem there were some other men with the name Jacob/James who had a father named Joseph and a brother named Jesus. André Lemaire, however, thinks that from a statistical point of view this chance is very limited. He estimates that no more than some 20 persons would fall into that category (an estimate that is, in my opinion, much too high; between 5 and 10 would be more realistic).¹⁷ But then, too, there remains a considerable margin of uncertainty as far as the identification of the three men mentioned on the ossuary is concerned. However, that problem looks much greater than it really is.

Of the ca. 3,000 Jewish tomb inscriptions from the Hellenistic and Roman periods there is, as far as I know, only one that identifies the deceased person as brother (or sister) of someone else.¹⁸ Other relatives are mentioned, but these are always parents or children of the deceased—and, obviously, husband

16 Now in four volumes; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002–2012. Lemaire could not yet know this work.

17 Lemaire assumes a minimum of 80,000 inhabitants of Jerusalem in the first century before the war of 66–74, a number that is certainly much too high. I cannot discuss that matter here and refer the reader L.I. Levine, *Jerusalem: Portrait of the City in the Second Temple Period (538 BCE–70 CE)* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2002), 340–343.

18 It is an ossuary found on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem: Rahmani, *Catalogue* no. 570 (for another very dubious case see no. 135). Here the reason for mentioning the brother's name is totally unclear. Even though I may have overlooked another instance of the formula 'x, brother/sister of y,' it is still safe to say (with Lemaire) that it is extremely exceptional.

or wife—but brothers or sisters never are.¹⁹ So it was definitely not part of the epigraphic habit to identify the deceased person by mentioning his or her brother or sister. To put it another way: When someone did mention a brother and thus deviated from the standard epigraphic custom, there must have been a very special and weighty reason for doing so: that brother must have been a very well-known and important person. This factor considerably reduces the number of possibilities of identification of the James mentioned on the ossuary. Which James with a father called Joseph had a very well-known brother called Jesus other than the James that we know from the New Testament as the brother of Jesus of Nazareth and who was so well-known as such that 30 years after his death even the Jewish historian Josephus identifies him as ‘James, the brother of Jesus who is called Christ’ (*Ant. Jud.* 20:200)? In view of the epigraphic habit and the fame of Jesus of Nazareth in first-century Jewish Palestine the chance that we have here the ossuary of someone other than the biblical James is extremely small.²⁰

To put it briefly: even though 100% certainty about the matter is unattainable, it seems very probable that this new find is an authentic ossuary from first-century Jerusalem and that the bones of Jesus’ brother James were deposited in it in the year 63 CE.

1.3 *The Relevance of the New Find*

If we accept for the sake of the argument that this is a correct conclusion, what could be the relevance of this find? First of all we note that, strangely enough, the media stress above all that at last the fact of Jesus’ existence has been proved independently of the Bible, as if there were any serious doubt about his existence! Even in circles of the most skeptical historians denying the historicity of Jesus is something passé. Confirmation of the fact that Jesus has really existed is something that no one—neither Christian nor non-Christian—needs to have. So that cannot be the relevance of the ossuary. However, in other ways as well the significance of this new find should not be overrated. After all, we do not learn anything really new from it.

19 That can easily be checked by consulting the indexes detailing the family relations in the epitaphs such as the ones in *JIGRE*, *JLWE* 1–11, *IJO* 1–111 etc.

20 The suggestion by one of my colleagues at Utrecht University that the phrase ‘brother of Jesus’ can also be taken to be an apposition to Joseph (not to James) cannot be excluded from a grammatical point of view but in view of the above-said it seems not very convincing. If it were correct, our James would be the otherwise unknown son of Jesus’ brother Joseph, mentioned in Matt. 13:55.

Of course, it is fascinating that here three persons known from the New Testament turn up in a non-biblical context. That is not something that happens every day.²¹ Before the publication of this ossuary inscription only three or four other New Testament persons were attested epigraphically. Firstly, there is the well-known inscription found in Caesarea Maritima in 1961 in which Pontius Pilate is mentioned.²² Secondly, there is the inscription from Delphi that mentions Seneca's brother Gallio, known to us from Acts 18.²³ Thirdly, since about 25 years we have the inscriptions on the ossuaries of the Caiaphas family.²⁴ Furthermore, it cannot be excluded (although it is far from certain) that the son of Simon of Cyrene (Mark 15:21) is mentioned in an inscription from Jerusalem.²⁵ But that is all there is and, moreover, one of these four cases is a dubious one. So the harvest is meager and some new material is welcome, but that should not make us too eager to find it.

An important function that this new inscription could fulfill is that it makes New Testament scholars aware of the potential relevance of non-literary material, in this case epigraphical evidence, for the study of the New Testament and early Christianity.²⁶ The gap between the disciplines of New Testament exegesis and epigraphy is still large. Fortunately, there are some exceptions such as the Australian series *Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* under supervision of G.H.R. Horsley and S. Llewelyn,²⁷ and also the recent collection of inscriptions from Philippi by the New Testament scholar Peter Pilhofer.²⁸ But on the whole disappointingly few exegetes are aware of the fact that not only texts but also 'stones speak' (*saxa loquuntur*).²⁹ Perhaps this new 'stone' will contribute to a heightening of interest in epigraphical matters.

21 For the Old Testament one could compare the famous 'house of David' inscription from Tel Dan.

22 J.-P. Lémonon, *Pilate et le gouvernement de la Judée. Textes et monuments* (Paris: Gabalda, 1981), 23–32 gives all details and a photo.

23 For details see K. Haacker, 'Gallio,' *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 2 (1992) 901–903.

24 See H.K. Bond, *Caiaphas: Friend of Rome and Judge of Jesus?* (Louisville: Westminster—John Knox Press, 2004), 1–8.

25 P.W. van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs. An Introductory Survey of a Millennium of Jewish Funerary Epigraphy (300 BCE–700 CE)* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1991), 140–141.

26 See my 'Das Neue Testament und die jüdische Grabinschriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit,' *Biblische Zeitschrift* NF 36 (1992) 161–178.

27 10 vols., Macquarie University: The Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, 1981–2012.

28 *Philippi. Band 2: Katalog der Inschriften von Philippi* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

29 J.J.E. Hondius, *Saxa loquuntur: Inleiding tot de Grieksche epigraphiek* (Leiden: Sijthof, 1938).

What is also of importance is that—again, on the assumption of the inscription's authenticity—James' bones were deposited in an ossuary, for that is a typically *Jewish* custom whereas James was for some thirty years, till his death in 62, the leader of the first *Christian* community in Jerusalem. This confirms what we already knew from elsewhere, namely that the first generation of Christians in Palestine, even though they adhered to some form of Christian belief, regarded themselves as fully Jewish. And it also fits in very well with what we know about James' attitude toward Jewish practice and belief from the New Testament and extra-biblical sources (e.g., Hegesippus). In the conflict about the validity of the Torah as the divine rule for life James has always advocated an outspoken '*Judaeo-Christian*' position which, for that very reason, led to great tension with Paul and his adherents. Josephus writes that after James had been murdered in Jerusalem, a wave of protest among the local Jews arose and that especially the Pharisees were active in this protest and argued for the deposition of the high priest who was responsible for this murder (*Antiquitates* 20:201). This makes clear in an impressive way how closely this leader of the first Christian community had remained connected to Judaism. For James, Judaism and Christianity were absolutely not separate religions!³⁰

Furthermore, it is fascinating to see that a generation after the death of Jesus (in 30 CE), his name was apparently so well-known in Jerusalem that James' relatives were of the opinion that when submitting his epitaph to the stonemason they should deviate from the custom of mentioning only his parents and/or children and instead should add the name of his famous brother, Jesus.

A final aspect that I wish to mention only briefly is that in this inscription, just as in the Gospels, James is called simply and frankly 'brother of Jesus' (see, e.g., Mark 3:31–32 and par.; Paul does the same in Gal. 1:19). Since 'son of Joseph' clearly has to be taken literally (Joseph was the begetter of Jacob), only a literal interpretation of the phrase 'brother of Jesus' does justice to the text. According to the doctrine of the Roman Catholic church Mary remained a virgin, so on this view Jesus could never have had brothers and sisters in the full sense of the word. For that reason the passages in the New Testament that mention Jesus' brothers and sisters always had to be explained away (they were nephews and nieces; in the Eastern Orthodoxies half-brothers and half-sisters).

30 The bibliography on James is vast. I mention only, *exempli gratia*, W. Pratscher, *Der Herrenbruder Jakobus und die Jakobustraditionen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987); R. Bauckham) *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1990); J. Painter; *Just James: The Brother of Jesus in History and Tradition* (Columbia: The University of South-Carolina Press, 1997).

The Greek text of the New Testament passages does not admit of such an explanation, but ecclesiastical dogma is always stronger than historical truth. The use of the Aramaic word *ʾach* in the inscription makes it even more difficult to maintain that that James was not a full brother of Jesus (in the sense of ‘a male from the same womb as the reference person’³¹) than was the case with the Greek *adelphos*. The authoritative *Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic* by Michael Sokoloff,³² s.v. *ʾach*, mentions in addition to the meaning ‘brother’ also a broader semantic aspect ‘kinsman,’ but the instances he quotes make clear that the word is never used in the concrete sense of ‘nephew’ or ‘half-brother.’ Once more: next to ‘son of Joseph’ the words ‘brother of Jesus’ cannot reasonably be explained as anything else than ‘a male from the same womb as the reference person.’ He who wants to make it mean something else is interpreting wishfully and should not be taken seriously. This new inscription will be a hard nut for the Vatican (on the internet Catholic theologians have already gone on the defensive). Fortunately, most Catholic biblical scholars nowadays have begun to think quite differently about this matter than the Vatican clerics.³³ Be that as it may, the terminology used in this new inscription supports the view that Jesus had very real brothers and sisters.

II

II.1 *The Controversy*

A year ago I wrote in this journal about a new archaeological discovery and the dispute that arose over it.³⁴ The find concerned the bone box that claimed to be the ossuary of “James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus” as its inscription told us. I argued that this could hardly be anyone else than the brother of Jesus we know from the New Testament, the leader of the earliest Christian community in Jerusalem. In spite of the fact that the Geological Survey of Israel (hereafter: GSI) wrote a report about it stating that the experts had not found any trace of modern doctoring with the ossuary, aside from

31 W. Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, rev. ed. by W.F. Danker (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000), 18.

32 Bar Ilan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1990, 45.

33 See, e.g., R. Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium. I. Teil* (Freiburg: Herder, 1976), 322–324.

34 ‘Het grafschrift van Jakobus, de broer van Jezus?’, *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 57 (2003) 1–9, repr. in my *Joden in de Grieks-Romeinse wereld* (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2003), 152–160. The publication that formed the start of the controversy is: A. Lemaire, ‘Burial Box of the Brother of Jesus,’ *BAR* 28,6 (2002) 24–33.

the fact that some of the letters on it had been cleaned, there were immediately many scholars who claimed loudly that the inscription was a hoax and asserted that those who kept open the possibility that the inscription was authentic were uncritical simpletons (even though they themselves often were not at all experts in this matter). In the article (that I wrote in November 2002) I claimed that so far no conclusive argument against the authenticity of the inscription had been produced (without claiming that its authenticity had been proved). In the following 12 months, the debate about this matter became sharper and more acrimonious and emotions began to run higher and higher.

But let me first inform the reader that in those twelve months two books were published which were closely related to the topic of the James ossuary. First, the editor-in-chief of BAR (= *Biblical Archaeology Review*), Hershel Shanks, and the biblical scholar Ben Witherington published *The Brother of Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2003). This is a book for a wider audience containing a detailed history of the discovery of the ossuary (by Shanks) and a study of the figure of James in the New Testament (by Witherington). The expert will not find much that is new in this book, which indeed is not wholly free from a certain sensationalism, but for a wider readership it may be interesting (in spite of somewhat fundamentalistic features). Later in 2003, the New Testament scholar Craig Evans published *Jesus and the Ossuaries: What Jewish Burial Practices Reveal about the Beginning of Christianity* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2003). This book has a considerably wider scope than the previous one. The discovery of the James ossuary is used here only as an occasion³⁵ to point out the relevance of ossuaries and their inscriptions, and indeed other epitaphs, for the study of the New Testament and early Christianity, a topic that is close to my heart.³⁶ Evans first deals with Jewish burial customs around the turn of the era, then turns to themes that occur in these epitaphs and to names one finds there in as far as they are relevant for New Testament studies, and finally he discusses ossuaries that have a special relevance for the study of the historical Jesus. Even though one may disagree with Evans' sometimes rather conservative approach, it is laudable that he tries to draw the attention of New Testament scholars who are so often one-sidedly focusing on literary sources, to the equally important 'speaking stones.' For that reason I recommend this book.³⁷

35 Evans deals summarily with the ossuary on pp. 112–122.

36 See P.W. van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs*, Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1991, 127–143.

37 A pagan counterpart of Evans' book is I. Peres, *Griechische Grabinschriften und neutestamentliche Eschatologie* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003). It is striking that the most recent

But let us now look at the most important developments in the debate during 2003. In June the Israel Antiquities Authority (hereafter: IAA) published a report about the ossuary in which the unanimous verdict of the experts about the inscription was: it is a forgery!³⁸ (The same report also deals with the equally controversial Jehoash inscription, which is also declared a hoax, but I leave that out of account.) Immediately after the appearance of this report, all those who had asserted right from the start that the inscription was a fake, claimed that it had now been proved that they were right, most often without having read the report and without having judged the validity of its arguments. They became even more convinced when almost at the same time as the appearance of the report the owner of the ossuary, Oded Golan, was arrested by the police and accused of falsification and illegal possession of antiquities. Professor André Lemaire, the epigraphist who had published the inscription, was not convinced at all, however. He and many others who had studied the inscription in the meantime were of the opinion that the report of the IAA was absolutely of inferior quality and deeply flawed. Also the authors of the report of the GSI (mentioned above) and also the experts of the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) in Toronto, where the ossuary had undergone extensive scrutiny in 2002 before its exposition, were unanimous in their criticism.³⁹ For that reason I will now first summarize the arguments of the report of the IAA and then the criticisms of Lemaire and others in order to give an impression of the debate and of the issues at stake.

But first a brief remark about the composition of the IAA committee which was given the task to study the artefact, or rather of the committees, for there were two of them set to work on the matter: a 'writing and content committee,' which was commissioned to study the language and script of the inscription, and a 'materials and patina committee,' which was commissioned to study the type of stone and the oxydation and weathering layer that had formed on the stone (the patina). In total there were fourteen people eight of whom would occupy themselves with the James ossuary (the rest would

introduction to the study of Graeco-Roman epigraphy was written by a New Testament scholar: B.H. McLean, *An Introduction to Greek Epigraphy of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods from Alexander the Great down to the Reign of Constantine (323 B.C.–A.D. 337)* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

38 Since this report is not available for purchase, I will summarize it on the basis of the text on internet (www.biblicalarchaeology.org) and the summary made by the IAA itself which is printed in *BAR* 29,5 (2003) 26–31. See also the extensive discussion and critique by André Lemaire in *BAR* 29,6 (2003) 50–58, 70.

39 For the ROM report see *BAR* 29, 4 (2003) 52–55.

work on the Jehoash inscription). A find like this should undergo three tests: Is the material (the stone) demonstrably as old as it is claimed to be (geology)? Does the shape of the letters agree with this supposed age (palaeography)? Is the language used consistent with the period (philology)? The specific guidelines of the committee members were 'to arrive at the truth based on pure research only—without taking into account any other related factors regarding the collector, current gossip, rumors, or prejudices.' Moreover, 'each scholar should work in his own discipline.'⁴⁰ Finally, it was stipulated that each committee member should document carefully all his or her assertions and that the final report should be available within three months. These are good guidelines, but things did not go as they should, as we will now see.

To begin with, it is strange that the director of the IAA, Shuka Dorfman, appointed almost exclusively committee members who had already expressed outspoken opinions to the effect that the inscription was a forgery before they became members of the committee. Moreover, virtually none the members were experts in palaeography or epigraphy, only in archaeology and history. Further it is curious, to say the least, that the reports of the geologists of the GSI and the ROM are not even mentioned by them and that the arguments in these reports are nowhere addressed. As far as the argumentation of the IAA itself is concerned, in the report every committee member describes his or her own reasonings and conclusions. These are as follows.

Amos Kloner, an archaeologist, says that the inscription looks rather recent and that the forger has tried to create an air of authenticity by imitating ancient examples. No proofs or arguments are given for these assertions. As André Lemaire rightly states, on the basis of such reasoning innumerable inscriptions from antiquity can be dismissed as forgeries for many of them have been preserved so well that they look as if they were recently made (and one does not have to be an archaeologist or epigraphist in order to confirm that). Kloner's argument that Jesus' relatives could not have had a tomb in Jerusalem because they were not from there is as lame as it could be. It is highly probable that the relatives of Jesus who joined the earliest Christian community came to live in Jerusalem, certainly his brother James who soon became the leader of the community there.

Tal Ilan, expert in the field of Jewish onomastics and women's studies, admits that she is not an expert in epigraphy and for that reason had to rely on the opinions of other experts, which is in flagrant contradiction with the guideline

40 *BAR* 29,5 (2003) 28.

that 'each scholar should work in his own discipline.' Nevertheless, she ventures the epigraphic judgement that the words 'brother of Jesus' are a later addition because these letters look more cursive than the others which are in a more formal style. However, apparently because other committee members regard the preceding words ('James, son of Joseph') as an addition to the (authentic) inscription 'brother of Jesus', Ilan strangely enough says further on that the forger got his hands on an ossuary with the authentic phrase 'brother of Jesus' (who could have been anyone) and added the words 'James, son of Joseph,' a curious statement which does not agree with what she said in the first instance. She does concede, however, that when she saw the inscription for the first time, before the controversy broke out, she could not find anything suspicious about it! But even if the inscription were authentic, says Ilan, there is no reason whatsoever to assume that it refers to the brother of Jesus in the New Testament. For there could be at least ten others with the name James who had a father called Joseph and a brother called Jesus (she does not mention the fact that others have come to much lower estimates, between 2 and 5 persons). So, again, neither arguments nor proofs are offered, but instead violations of the guidelines. A very curious blunder is her assertion that the spellings of the names Jacob with a *waw* and Joseph without *he* (resp. *y'qwb* instead of *y'qb* and *ywsp* instead of *yhwsp*) hardly ever occur in the period under consideration and thus raise suspicion, whereas the contrary is true. Lemaire demonstrates that in 60 (for James) resp. 10 (for Josef) percent of the occurrences of these names in inscriptions and papyri they are written in exactly that spelling. An onomastic expert such as Tal Ilan should have known this, as Lemaire rightly remarks. It should be clear that no value whatever can be attached to such a hodge-podge of unfounded impressions.

The archaeologist Ronny Reich begins with the sober remark that, if the inscription had read 'Joseph, son of Jacob, brother of Jesus,' no one would have cared about it, let alone would the IAA have commissioned an investigation of its authenticity. 'No one would have raised an eyebrow, and the inscription would have quietly entered the statistical lists without a further thought.'⁴¹ And right he is. The commotion could only come into being because of the suggestive collocation of names that remind one so strongly of the New Testament. Elsewhere too Reich lets shine through that according to him the game is not worth the candle. He does not see any difference between the first and second half of the inscription (Lemaire, too, states that in both halves of the text the formal and the cursive styles are intermingled, which is a not uncommon

41 *BAR* 29,6 (2003) 55.

phenomenon). Reich does not see any indications of forgery but in the end he nonetheless votes against authenticity! Why? Because the 'materials committee' says that the patina in the letters is not ancient. But in this way Reich violates the rule that each expert is obliged to present an opinion that is based only upon his own discipline. This is certainly the way to come to a unanimous verdict!

Esther Eshel, paleographer, rejects the authenticity of the inscription because she does not know any other ossuary on which the decoration (in this case some rosettes on the back) is so vague and worn out whereas the inscription is so clear and sharp. In fact, such cases are far from exceptional. Lemaire refers to several ossuaries in Rahmani's collection⁴² on which the same phenomenon is seen. It fully depends on the individual history of an ossuary whether or not only one side or more or even all sides are weathered and worn. She, too, states that two different hands must have been at work on the ossuary, but Lemaire gives several convincing examples of other inscriptions in which the same variety of script is visible without anyone ever having spoken of 'two hands' in those cases. Finally, she claims that the forger has copied the words 'brother of ...' from the only other ossuary on which this word combination occurs, no. 570 in Rahmani's catalogue. She concludes this from the fact that in both inscriptions of the *dalet* (in *achuy de*) only the vertical stroke of the letter is written, which is exceptional. Alas for Esther Eshel, on our ossuary the horizontal stroke of the *dalet*—which was certainly there, as is evident from the earliest photos—has become invisible because the stone was broken during the transportation from Israel to Canada (for the exposition in Toronto) and the break runs exactly through the horizontal stroke of the *dalet* with the result that it has now disappeared.

This is the 'expert opinion' of the members of the 'writing committee.' It is stupefying that there are scholars who think in all seriousness that decisive proof of the inscription's inauthenticity has now been provided. One really does not have to be a genius in order to see that no compelling arguments whatsoever have been put forward. Lemaire compares the situation with that of the well-known Moabitic stele of Mesha, found in 1868, and contentious for a long time, until finally, in 1945, the last 'critic' was effectively silenced by Albright. Nowadays everyone is convinced of the authenticity of the inscription on that stone. Can we perhaps expect more common sense of the members of the 'materials committee'? Let us see.

42 See Rahmani, *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries*.

For the sake of brevity, I will not render here the individual opinions of the members but summarize the tenor and essentials of the report of this committee. To begin with, which is surely most curious, the committee members say that their report is not yet 'final' and that one should wait for that until it is published in a scientific journal. It is explicitly stated that the report is not a 'scientific article,' while the IAA had asked precisely for a final scientific study. That is to say, the details needed in order to be able to assess the argumentation are withheld from us, and that in a report that should have been the IAA's final word on the matter. This is an utterly strange way of dealing with such a controversial issue. What the argumentation of the IAA now boils down to is that the patina in most of the letters does not match with the patina on the rest of the bone box, which suggests (not: proves!) forgery. It is also established that the really old patina is found in the letters of the phrase 'brother of Jesus,' so these could be authentic. It is then highly curious that the IAA concludes that this cannot be the case, however, because the preceding words are definitely a forgery (*quod est demonstrandum!*). The question whether an ossuary with only the words 'brother of Jesus' is imaginable at all is not even raised. The geologists and petrographers in the committee suggest that the fact that the patina in the final words is old must be the result of a testing error (here the *parti-pris* of the committee members becomes painfully clear). They are also of the opinion that the younger patina in the other letters was applied there in an attempt to give the new letters an old appearance. Nevertheless one of them let slip a remark between brackets (!) that it could be that the inscription had been cleaned rather recently: 'the inscription was engraved (or at least, *completely cleaned*), in modern times.' But whether the suspect patina layer could have been created there as a result of the use of a detergent in the cleaning operation is an obvious question that is never raised. In general alternative possibilities are not mentioned, let alone weighed, although both the GSI and the ROM team had emphatically pointed out that the first half of the inscription had recently been cleaned. Cleaning is something more often done by antiquities dealers in order to enhance the legibility of an inscription and thus to heighten the market value of the artefact.

The director of the GSI said in a declaration that the report of the geologists of the IAA was utterly tendentious and onesided and that it has not offered any valid proof of the forged nature of the inscription. But the odd thing is that it is exactly the arguments and conclusions of this 'materials committee' that induced some members of the 'writing committee' to declare the inscription to be a forgery, although on the basis of their own expertise they saw no reason to do so. Here something has clearly gone very wrong. Neither the reports of

the individual specialists nor the conclusions based upon them (or not based upon them!) have a scientific basis. Seldom has a 'final scientific report' been so much the contrary of what it should have been.

On a conference of the Society of Biblical Literature in November 2003, a special session about the James ossuary was organized in which, apart from André Lemaire and Hershel Shanks, two American geologists read a paper, Richard Newman (Boston) and James Harrell (Toledo).⁴³ Both of them found a mix of old and new patina in a cleaned inscription completely normal: chemicals used to clean a stone surface often create a 'false' patina. They had found both old and new patina in almost all letters of the inscription and were of the opinion that the conclusions of the 'materials committee' of the IAA were premature and overhasty and that they suggested a certainty that cannot exist in this case.

The great question that should now be asked is: Where does the unanimous verdict 'FAKE' come from when there are no really conclusive arguments to support such a verdict? That is a question that will probably always remain to some degree a matter of guesswork, but we do not stand completely empty-handed. To begin with, there is the figure of the director of the IAA, Shuka Dorfman, who already for several years is engaged in a feud with Hershel Shanks, the editor-in-chief of the *Biblical Archaeology Review*. That feud mainly concerns the question whether the scholarly world should pay attention to archaeological artifacts that appear on the market outside of supervised and documented official excavations, the so-called 'unprovenanced objects.' Very many objects (according to some estimates up to some 50% of all archaeological objects) turn up in the world of the antiquities dealers without anybody knowing for sure where they come from. In many cases it concerns looted or illegally excavated objects the original context of which can no longer be reconstructed. That is very regrettable and all possible measures should be taken in order to prevent this from happening or at least to curb these criminal activities. The question now is whether that also implies that no attention should be paid any longer to such unprovenanced objects. That question divides the world of archaeologists. Shanks maintains that it would be nonsensical to boycott such objects for that would imply that one should also ignore the many Dead Sea Scrolls that were found by Bedouins and thereafter were offered for sale on

43 Telling detail: The two geologists of the IAA who were members of the 'materials committee' (A. Ayalon and Y. Goren) were present at the conference but refused to attend the special meeting on the ossuary and engage in debate with their colleagues.

the antiquities market. And one could think also of the thousands of archaeological objects that play an important role already for a very long time in the scholarly debate, such as the Mesha stele. However detestable the practices of archaeological robbery may be, when the objects are there, we have the obligation to study them to the best of our knowledge and publish the results of our research. This is what Shanks says, but Dorfman disagrees completely. He is of the opinion that 'unprovenanced material' should be boycotted systematically on principle and that those who do not keep strictly to this rule should be excommunicated from the world of respectable archaeologists, Hershel Shanks in the first place because he readily opens the pages of his *BAR* for publication of material irrespective of the question whether or not it is provenanced. This is a bitter fight—archaeologists of the IAA are not even allowed to speak to board members of *BAR*—but details do not matter here. The basic point is that Dorfman goes far in outlawing non-authorized objects, their owners, and the scholars who study these objects, if necessary by means of intimidation.⁴⁴ The fact that Dorfman staffed the IAA committees with people almost all of whom had already stated that they thought the inscription was a forgery raises the suspicion that the IAA report was meant to serve as a weapon in the war with Shanks and his lot. When an object such as this ossuary succeeds in drawing undeserved attention, then it is best to declare it to be a fake so that those who published it can be put pilloried. Therefore, as one of the IAA committee members said anonymously, "We *had to* reach a firm conclusion!"⁴⁵ There was a lot of pressure, the more so since even before the committees had finished their job, the press already published their conclusion: Fake! The simple fact that otherwise right-minded people reach a so-called 'unanimous' conclusion on such shaky grounds and in glaring violation of the guidelines they had received, and suggest an impossible certainty, all that raises the strong suspicion that they had to work with tied hands.⁴⁶ From occasional remarks in the

44 It is telling that Oded Golan, the owner of the James ossuary, was arrested by a great number of policemen in the middle of the night as if he were a dangerous criminal, was handcuffed while TV camera's were present, and after that was interrogated for 30 hours continuously. Also the bringing into circulation of rumours that Golan had confessed to having forged the inscription—*quod non*—seems to belong to this tactic.

45 See *BAR* 29,6 (2003) 52.

46 Oded Golan jokingly remarked in a short lecture at the SBL Meeting in Atlanta (23 Nov. 2003) that, when everyone knows that "where there are two Jews there are three opinions," it is an amazing event in the history of the Jewish people that a committee of no less than 14 Jews reaches unanimity!

IAA report about Christianity and Christian scholars, remarks that sound irritated and sometimes a bit condescending, one also gets the impression that the fact that evangelical Christians created such a fuss over the ossuary much annoyed these scholars.⁴⁷

Falsification of archaeological artifacts and inscriptions takes place almost without exception for financial gain. It is good to keep soberly in mind that no one has ever tried to make money from this ossuary. The owner never has put it up for sale; he is not a dealer but a collector (he has one of the largest private collections of antiquities in Israel). Further one should also keep in mind that if a forger had wished to bring an ossuary with this text into circulation, it would have been much easier to buy an uninscribed ossuary on the antiquities market (there are hundreds of them) and then to inscribe it with the required text, than to use an already inscribed ossuary and add with one's own hands some words to an already existing text, with a much greater risk of discovery. The fact that this has not happened makes the thesis of a forged inscription on the James ossuary all the more improbable.

It is not my intention—as it was not in my article of 2003 (part 1 of this paper)—to declare here that the authenticity of the inscription is now a fully certain fact. I have no vested interest in the whole matter (and, as I said before, its relevance is very limited). What I wanted to show is how easily renowned scholars can come to 'certain' conclusions on the basis of a rambling argumentation. The simple truth is that it has never been proved that the inscription on the James ossuary is a forgery—the evidence seems to point rather in the opposite direction. But at the moment we have to suspend our judgement. At best we can give the ossuary the benefit of the doubt, for the time being. It is disconcerting to see how prematurely both parties have entrenched themselves in untenable positions even before a serious and independent investigation could take place. That the IAA did not produce that independent investigation is crystal clear. It is to be hoped that the IAA will soon return the ossuary to its owner so that a really independent team of scholars can take this task to hand.

47 Oded Golan told that he surmises that the excessive enthusiasm about the ossuary among the *Jews for Jesus* movement in Israel has evoked much aversion among IAA staff and others.

III

In the *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* of 2003 and 2004 (parts I and II of this paper) I discussed at length the discovery and publication of the so-called James ossuary with the Aramaic inscription *Ya'aqov bar Yoseph 'achuy de-Yeshua'* ('James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus'), and also the controversy that erupted immediately afterwards. I now want to update readers of this journal about the bizarre development of this affair in the past decade, and especially about its (provisional) zenith (or nadir?) in the spring of 2012 and the shameful role several scholars played in this whole affair.

In 2004, the IAA decided that their conclusions justified starting a lawsuit against Oded Golan and four other collectors of antiquities (among whom was the well-known scholar Robert Deutsch) with the accusation of forgery of and illegal dealing in antiquities. Three of the five were very soon acquitted because of lack of convincing proof, but Golan and Deutsch remained in the dock. The decision to sue Golan was also inspired by the fact that in the meantime an IAA member had declared that in the middle of the '90s of the 20th century he had seen the ossuary in a shop of a Jerusalem antiquities dealer *without* the words 'brother of Jesus.' The lawsuit lasted eight years!⁴⁸ The Jerusalem court took the matter very seriously and did its own very thorough research on the ossuary and its inscription (and also on some other artifacts such as the Jehoash inscription and the ivory pomegranate with an inscription mentioning the Jerusalem temple). No less than 138 witnesses were summoned, mainly scholars from all over the world in the fields of epigraphy, archaeology, palaeography, Semitic languages, C-14 dating methods, bio-geology etcetera. All this resulted in a transcript of the court sessions of some 12,000 (!) pages. The final verdict was given on March 14, 2012 by judge Aaron Farkash; its printed version is 474 pages. In it, the defendants are acquitted from all charges. On the basis of numerous testimonies and statements by experts, who were this time really independent, the judge came to the inevitable conclusion that there is not the slightest evidence of forgery in the case of the inscription on the James ossuary.

It was rather disconcerting that several members of the IAA committees that had written the report with the unanimous verdict that the inscription was a hoax, backed down in court, for instance by admitting that they had said that

48 See H. Shanks, 'The Forgery Trial of the Century,' in H. Shanks (ed.), *James Brother of Jesus: The Forgery Trial of the Century* (Washington: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2012), 2–8; Oded Golan's own story of the trial can be found at <http://www.bib-arch.org/scholars-study/the-authenticity-of-the-james-ossuary.pdf>. See also H. Shanks, 'Fudging with Forgeries,' *BAR* 37/6 (Nov.–Dec. 2011) 53–58.

there was no ancient patina in the words 'brother of Jesus' whereas in fact it *was* there. The man who had said that he had seen the ossuary *without* the words 'brother of Jesus' now said that had been only a joke!⁴⁹ What became painfully clear was that many declarations of inauthenticity were inspired by the fear of being regarded as 'uncritical' by colleagues, even though the real experts (such as the famous Jerusalem epigrapher Ada Yardeni) had always remained fully convinced of the authenticity of the inscription.

For the self-styled 'critical' minds this outcome was very painful. One can only hope that this nasty affair brings scholars to renewed reflection on ethics in our field of research. Finding the truth should always have priority above one's reputation as a 'critical' scholar. I do not imply here that the authenticity of the inscription is from now on an indisputable fact; what I do want to argue, however, is that the *a priori* assumption that a potentially sensational find *must* be a fake is not the hallmark of a really critical mind. One of the sad results of this affair, the lawsuit included, is that an unprejudiced investigation of this ossuary and its inscription has by now become wellnigh impossible, because it has become a 'tainted' object.⁵⁰

49 Zie H. Shanks, 'Joe Zias: "Hershel Has No Sense of Humor"', *BAR* 38/3 (May–June 2012) 22.

50 Fortunately, the inscription now receives a fair treatment by Jonathan Price and Ada Yardeni in the new and authoritative *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae*, vol. 1/1 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2010), 547–548 (no. 531), quite unlike E.M. Meyers and M.A. Chancey, *Alexander to Constantine: Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* (New Haven—London: Yale University Press, 2012), 194–197.

The Greek of the Inscriptions

Since most of the early Jewish inscriptions are in Greek, it is in order to pay some attention to the nature of this Greek.¹ The inscriptions amply testify to the fact that there was no such thing as a typically Jewish Greek. Apart from the vocabulary, which of course does contain such typically Jewish words as *nomomathês*, *philentolos*, *philosynagôgos*, *philopenês* etc., the Greek language of these inscriptions is not different from what we encounter in pagan non-literary sources from the same period.² For those who are used to reading only literary texts, the first encounter with these inscriptions may come as a shock. Most of them are written in a very poor and vulgar Greek, which can be read only by one who has the necessary minimum knowledge of developments in post-classical spoken Greek.³ The following brief sketch intends to provide that minimum of knowledge in the field of phonology, morphology, and syntax, in so far as it is required to enable the beginner to read the Jewish inscriptions.⁴

- 1 This chapter draws heavily upon chapter 2 ('The Languages') of my 1991 book *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs*. For the linguistic peculiarities of the Latin inscriptions a helpful guide is C.H. Grandgent, *An Introduction to Vulgar Latin* (New York: Hafner, 1962).
- 2 For an excellent survey of the debate see G.H.R. Horsley, 'The Fiction of Jewish Greek,' in his *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* 5 (North Ryde, N.S.W.: Macquarie Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, 1989), 5–40.
- 3 For the place of Hellenistic Greek in the development of the Greek language see, e.g., G. Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and Its Speakers* (London & New York: Longman, 1997), 32–70.
- 4 Although more than a century old, K. Dieterich, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der griechischen Sprache von der hellenistischen Zeit bis zum 10. Jhdt. n. Chr.* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1898; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1970), is still a good guide. The same applies to A.N. Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar Chiefly of the Attic Dialect* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1968; repr. of the London 1897 ed.). One may also consult F.J. Blass, A. Debrunner & F. Rehkopf, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975; 14th ed. or later), §§ 8–126; or G. Mussies, *The Morphology of Koine Greek As Used in the Apocalypse of St. John: A Study in Bilingualism* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 22–62. The most useful and up to date guide is F.T. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (2 vols.; Milano: Cisalpino-Goliardica, 1976–1981; vol. 3 on syntax is eagerly awaited). For what follows I have also made use of the philological notes in N. Müller—N.A. Bees, *Die Inschriften der jüdischen Katakomben am Monte Verde zu Rom* (Leipzig: Harassowitz, 1919); H.J. Leon, 'The Language of the Greek Inscriptions from the Jewish Catacombs of Rome,' *TAPA* 58 (1927) 210–233; idem, 'The Jews

1 Phonology

The most frequently occurring orthographical interchanges in Koine Greek are:

Interchange of αι and ε,⁵ of which one finds innumerable instances in our epitaphs, e.g., κέ, κεῖτε, Αἰβρέος, αἰν, ἐνθάδαι, φιλόταικνος, παρθαίνος.⁶

Interchange of ει and ι:⁷ e.g. δεικέα (= δικαία), βείωσας, οὐδῖς, ἰς, κῖτε (= κεῖται), θάρι (= θάρρει).

Interchange of η and ι/ει:⁸ e.g. ἀνίρ, ἴτις, νίπιος, δῆς, ῥάββη, ἱρίνι, ἡρήνη, εἰρείνη.⁹

Interchange of η and ε/αι:¹⁰ νέπιος, συναγωγῆς, ἐπλέρωσε, ἦτη (ἔτη), ἔδε (= ἦδη), ἦν (= ἐν), ἦνδῃκα, μεμόριον. In the earlier period (till the second century CE) the η evidently still retained its value of a long *e*; thereafter it gradually merged with *i*, as in modern Greek.¹¹

Interchange of οι and υ:¹² e.g. ὕ (= οἶ), τῶς (= τοῖς), κύμισις (= κοίμησις).¹³

Interchange of υ and ει/ι/η:¹⁴ e.g. ὕ (= ἦ), εἰωνῶς (= εἰωνός), ἱπέρ, γλικυτάτη.

of Venusia,' *JQR* 44 (1953/54) 267–284, esp. 274–278; idem, *Jews of Ancient Rome* Ch. 5 ('The Language of the Jews of Rome'); C. Brixhe, *Essai sur le grec anatolien au début de notre ère* (Nancy: Presses universitaires de Nancy, 1984). For abbreviations used in the inscriptions the reader is best referred to A. Calderini, *Epigrafia* (Torino: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1974), 68–78 (general introduction) and 247–340 (comprehensive list of abbreviations compiled by S. Daris).

5 Gignac, *Grammar* I 192–193.

6 Only for very specific instances will I give references to the place of publication. It did not seem wise and useful to burden the text with numerous numbers when instances of the phenomena described can be found on almost every page of the standard editions. Accents and spiritus have been added by me for the sake of readability.

7 Gignac, *Grammar* I 189–191.

8 Gignac, *Grammar* I 235–242.

9 For εἰρήνη I found the following variant spellings: ἡρήνη, ἱρίνι, ἐρήνη, ἐρείνη, εἰρείνη, ἱρήνη, ἐρένη, ἡρίνη, εἰρίνη, εἰρίνι, and in Latin characters *hirene*, *iren*. Spellings such as ἱρη, εἰρηη, ἐρη and εἰρνε are probably just scribal errors. With knowledge of these interchanges a form like αἰπηστᾶτις becomes intelligible as a variant of ἐπιστάτης.

10 Gignac, *Grammar* I 242–249.

11 Leon, 'Jews of Venusia' 274–275, remarks that this form of itacism had clearly developed further in the (later) Venusian inscriptions than in the (earlier) Roman.

12 Gignac, *Grammar* I 197–199.

13 For κοίμησις I found the following spellings: κύμισις, κύμησις, κόμησις, κώμισι, κύμηση, κοίμησι, κοίμηση, κίμησις, κύμησης, κύμυσε, κύμης, and in Latin characters *cymisis*, *quimesis* (see also N.A. Bees in *Rheinisches Museum* 71 [1916] 287–288). Even κόνωσις is found (*JWE* II 126, but Noy sees this spelling as just a misunderstanding by the stonecutter).

14 Gignac, *Grammar* I 267–273.

Interchange of ϵ/ι and ϵ/α :¹⁵ e.g. ἐρήνη, ἰπήνευσε (= ἐπίνευσε), τέλεον, χέρα, χῆθη (= κείται).¹⁶

Interchange of ω and $\omicron$:¹⁷ e.g. συνβίο (= συμβίω), ὅς (= ὡς), ὦ (= ὁ), γραμματέος, υἰώς, ἱαιρέος (= ἱερέως).

Interchange of α and ϵ :¹⁸ e.g. ἀνθάδε, ἐτάρης (= ἐτέροις), τέσσερες, μυραψός.

Interchange of α and $\omicron$:¹⁹ e.g. σαρός, ὀθάνατος.

Change from $\epsilon\upsilon$ to $\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$:²⁰ e.g. ἱερούς, γραμματεούς (also the spelling γραμματέος is occasionally found). This change indicates that $\epsilon\upsilon$ was still a diphthong with the value ew (as is also apparent from ἀνασκέβασε = ἀνασκεύασαι); the same applies to $\alpha\upsilon$ as is evidenced by αὔουτῆς (= *awtes*).

Interchange of α and $\alpha\upsilon$:²¹ e.g. ἀτῆς (= αὔτῆς), Ἀγουστέσιοι (= Αὔγουστήσιοι).

Interchange of γ and ι :²² e.g. ὑγός (= υἰός; elsewhere one finds the spellings υείός, υἰώς, and υός and all were pronounced like (*i*)γος), ἱερουσιάρχης, Παρηγόριος (= Paregorios).

The aspirate was no longer pronounced as is apparent from the spellings *e* and *ae* (instead of *he/hae*) for η in Latin transcriptions of Greek epitaphs and from the confusion in spellings like *hirene* and *μεθ' ἑμοῦ*. Also the aspirates θ and χ were often changed into τ and κ due to loss of aspiration:²³ e.g., ἐντάδε, παρτέ-νος, τιγάτερ, οὐκ ἡμῖν. And note the false aspiration in forms like ἀθανάθος, χῖτε and κίθε (for κείται).²⁴ The ϕ ceased to be a diphthong (*ph*) and had become an *f*, as is apparent from the consequent Latin transcription with *f* and from its use in Greek transliterations of Latin words, e.g. φιλιωρουν = *florum*, φηκίτ = *fecit*.²⁵

15 Gignac, *Grammar* I 249–262. That ϵ was sometimes pronounced as *i* seems evident also from forms like ἐνθάδι, ἐνστρίψατο, and also οἰυμύρι (= εὐμοίρει) where $\omicron\iota = \iota = \epsilon$, on which see B. Lifshitz, 'La vie de l'au-delà dans les conceptions juives,' *RB* 68 (1961) 404 n. 22.

16 For κείται/κείται I found no less than 20 spelling variants: κείτε, κίτε/κίντε, κίτεν, κείθαιν, ἐκείθεν, ἐκίθεν, κίτη, χίθη, χῆθη, χείθε, χίθε, χίτε, κίθε, χείθαι, κίται, κείτι, κείτη, κῆτι, κίτει, κιτούται (as if from *κειτέομαι). The spellings κιετε and κικε are probably mistakes of the engraver. On the incorrect aspiration and the addition (or omission) of the augment see below.

17 Gignac, *Grammar* I 275–278.

18 Gignac, *Grammar* I 278–286.

19 Gignac, *Grammar* I 286–288.

20 Gignac, *Grammar* I 230–231; also Robert, *BE* 1966 no. 81 and 1972 no. 578.

21 Gignac, *Grammar* I 226–228.

22 Gignac, *Grammar* I 71–72.

23 Gignac, *Grammar* I 134–138.

24 Phrases like ἐντάδε χείθε and τετάρθo are perhaps cases of metathesis of aspiration caused by lack of knowledge of the correct forms.

25 Gignac, *Grammar* I 99–100.

The ζ seems to have developed the phonetic value *dj* or even *j*: we find ζάβλου for διὰ βλου (once in Latin *iablu*, *JlWE* II 198), κοζουγι as a transcription of *coiugi* (= *coniugi*, cf. *cogiugi* in *JlWE* II 367), and Προζεκτω for *Projecto* (*JlWE* II 536); cf. the later Greek ζάβολος for διάβολος.²⁶

Some minor peculiarities are forms like μικκή for μικρά, not uncommon in Koine Greek and preserved in modern Greek μικιός and μικκούτικος;²⁷ further συνγωγή and ἀρχισύνγωγος with syncope of the vowel in an unstressed syllable;²⁸ frequent gemination of a consonant, e.g. in προσσήλυτος, ἀνορροῦξει, γοννεῦσιν, ἄμμωμος, ἔζζησεν, Ἰούστος; and the reverse in γραματεὺς, θρέμασιν, γεναίη, ἱέρισα.²⁹ But here we are moving already into the field of morphology.

2 Morphology

Of morphological changes brought about by phonological developments, we may note the following:

Final -ς is frequently omitted,³⁰ most often in κοίμησι and its variant spellings (κύμηση, etc.).

Final -ν is also often omitted:³¹ τή, τῶ, etc.; but sometimes it is added where it should not be: κίτεν, κείθαίν, ἐκίθεν (all of them = κείται), et al.³²

Dropping of ν in medial position is also attested: e.g., Ἀλεξαδρέου (= Ἀλεξανδρέως), διαφέροτα (= διαφέροντα), μησκόμενος (= μνησκόμενος).³³

²⁶ Gignac, *Grammar* I 75. But see Horsley, *New Documents* v 15.

²⁷ Gignac, *Grammar* II 113–114; also Müller—Bees, *Inschriften* 51, and B. Lifshitz, 'Inscriptions grecques de Césarée en Palestine,' *RB* 68 (1961) 118.

²⁸ Cf. *snoge* for 'synagogue' in some Dutch-speaking Jewish circles. Gignac, *Grammar* I 302–310, gives many examples and pays special attention to the frequency of this phenomenon in Latin loanwords (309–310); in our epitaphs, e.g. Βερνακλήσιος = *Vernaculenses*.

²⁹ Gignac, *Grammar* I 154–165. Unique is the spelling of the name Βαρσθεοδα (*JlWE* II 551) with a Hebrew *shin* in the middle of a Greek word, perhaps because Greek knew no such sound as a *shin*.

³⁰ Gignac, *Grammar* I 124–129.

³¹ Gignac, *Grammar* I 111–112; also Dieterich, *Untersuchungen* 88–91.

³² Gignac, *Grammar* I 112–114. At p. 113 Gignac remarks that the very frequent omission and converse erroneous addition of final *nun* indicates that final nasal was dropped in the speech of many.

³³ Gignac, *Grammar* I 116–118. Gignac gives no parallels to the genitive form -έου in a word ending on -εύς; see vol. II 85.

We perhaps have a prothetic ι in Ἰστασία for Στασία (*JIWE* II 102);³⁴ sometimes prothetic ε, in ἐκίθεν for κείται, but see below on false augments.

Further we may notice influence of Latin upon the endings of nouns of the first and second declensions: e.g. the nominatives νίπιους (= νήπιος), Σελεύκους; the genitives συνγωγῇ (= *synagogae*), Βερνακλώρω (= *Vernaculorum*), both occurring only in *JIWE* II 114: Δωνάτος γραμματεὺς συνγωγῇ Βερνακλώρω. This phenomenon has been observed mainly in the inscriptions from Rome.³⁵

Names in -ιος are often spelled with -ις: e.g., Ἀλύπις, Εὐσέβις, but the genitives of these names are in -ιου.³⁶ Cf. also πεδὶν for παιδίον.³⁷

Extension of the plural nominative ending -ες to the accusative is evidenced by μῆνας τέσσαρες, ἔζησεν ... μῆνες ἕξ, etc.³⁸ It is also found in an inscription of which every single word is spelled incorrectly (by a *grammateus*!), *JIWE* II 250: Γημηλλίνη νηπεία ἴτις ἤζησεν ἦτη μεία μήνης ἦνδεκα (to be read as Γεμελλίνη νηπία ἦτις ἔζησεν ἔτη μία [= ἔτος ἓν!] μῆνες ἔνδεκα).

Occasionally we find the forms γερουσιάρχων instead of the usual γερουσιάρχης, and φιλαδελφῶν instead of the usual φιλάδελφος. As to the first, nouns deriving from ἄρχω always end in -άρχης or -αρχος, never in -άρχων. But here the writers of the epitaphs were no doubt influenced by the ending of the term ἄρχων, which is the most frequently occurring title of an official in Jewish inscriptions.³⁹ As for the second, φιλαδελφῶν is also a mixed form, based for the first half on φιλάδελφος and for the second on φίλος ἀδελφῶν; it is perhaps comparable to φιλοπάτορος and φιλομήτορος (*JIWE* II 254, both nominatives!), possibly formed after both φιλοπάτωρ/-μήτωρ and φίλος πατρός/μητρός, although in this case another factor may have been at work, namely the tendency in post-classical Greek to transfer third-declension nouns and adjectives to the second declension.⁴⁰

34 See P. Kretschmer's review of Müller-Bees, *Die Inschriften der jüdischen Katakombe am Monteverde zu Rom*, in *Glotta* 12 (1923) 193; but see also Noy ad loc.

35 See Müller—Bees, *Inschriften* 101, and Leon, *Jews of Ancient Rome* 84.

36 Gignac, *Grammar* II 25–29; at p. 28 Gignac notes that in the course of time a new declensional type developed: κύρις, κυροῦ, κυρῶ, κύριν.

37 U.M. Fasola, 'Le due catacombe ebraiche di Villa Torlonia,' *Riv. Arch. Crist.* 52 (1976) 49.

38 Gignac, *Grammar* II 46–47, 191–192. At p. 47 Gignac remarks that this extension resulted eventually in the adoption of -ες as the nom.-acc. plur. ending of the first declension in Modern Greek.

39 The variant spellings εἰεροσάρχης, ἱεροσιάρχης, ἱεροσιάρχων are no doubt based on folk-etymology (ἱερός), facilitated by the pronunciation of γ as ι.

40 Gignac, *Grammar* II 62–64.

In verbs in past tenses the (syllabic) augment is sometimes omitted, a first step towards the more restricted use of the augment in modern Greek (certainly not an archaism):⁴¹ θῆκεν, ποίησεν. Forms like ἐκίθεν (for κείται), mentioned above under 'prothetic e', may in fact be cases of augment-transfer.⁴²

The widespread phenomenon of replacement of second aorist endings by those of the first aorist is visible in forms like ἀπέθαναν and ἔλαβας.⁴³

3 Syntax

Most of the inscriptions are brief and have been written in a simple Greek from a syntactical point of view. Only some features deserve attention.

There are some striking indications of the dative's obsolescence:⁴⁴ ἐν εἰρήνης, σὺν τῆς συμβίου αὐτοῦ. Hand in hand with this development goes the taking over of the functions of ἐν + dative by εἰς + accusative: e.g., εἰς μίαν ἀπέθαναν ἡμέραν, εἰς τὸ μέσον κείται.⁴⁵ Sometimes adjectives and participles do not agree with the nouns they qualify: ἔτη τρεῖς,⁴⁶ ἔτη μία (for ἔτος ἓν), Ῥεβεκκα ... ζῆσας, μνήμα διαφέροντα ...⁴⁷ Once the verb does not agree with the subject, ἐνθάδε κίται θυγατέρες δύο (*JIWE* II 579), but here the engraver apparently started thoughtlessly with the stereotyped *incipit*, which almost always had the verb in the singular.⁴⁸

Sometimes appositions fail to agree in case with the substantives to which they refer: θυγάτηρ Μηνοφίλου πατὴρ συναγωγῆς or Εἰρήνα ... σύμβιος Κλωδίου ἀδελφὸς Κούντου. The tendency to fall back into the nominative case in appo-

41 Gignac, *Grammar* II 223–225.

42 Gignac, *Grammar* II 225.

43 Gignac, *Grammar* II 335–345.

44 J. Humbert, *La disparition du datif en Grec* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1930). W. Dressler, 'Der Untergang des Dativs in der anatolischen Gräzität,' *Wiener Studien* 78 (1965) 83–107. Brixhe, *Essai sur le grec anatolien* 95–100.

45 F. Blass—A. Debrunner—F. Rehkopf, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch* (17th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), par. 205.

46 Gignac, *Grammar* II 190, quotes instances like ἀρτάβας τρία.

47 Curiously enough, the only 3 instances of this incorrect use of διαφέροντα / διαφέρων occur in inscriptions from Jaffa. The necropolis of Jaffa yields 5 instances of διαφέρειν in the sense of 'belonging to', but with no less than 4 different constructions: with genitive, with ἀπό + gen., with dative, and with accusative. See *CIJ* 937, 938, 947, 955, and an additional instance published by B. Lifshitz, 'Varia epigraphica,' *Euphrosyne* n.s. 6 (1973/74) 29–31; see also his 'Varia epigraphica,' *Epigraphica* 26 (1974) 84.

48 So correctly Leon, *Jews* 86.

sitions is a well-known phenomenon in vulgar Greek, but it occurs especially frequently in Semiticizing Greek.⁴⁹

There are several instances of the use of ὅστις for the relative pronoun ὅς, but also of τίς for ὅς or ἦ, e.g., ἐνθάδε κεῖται Οὐρσος γραμματεὺς τίς ἔζησεν κτλ. We also find ὁ for ὅς and τό for ὅ: ... ὁ ἔθρεψεν ἡμᾶς and τὸ ἐμὸν μνήμα τὸ μετὰ πολλῶν μοχθῶν ἐποίησα.⁵⁰

Sometimes the engravers had problems with indicating the age of the deceased: ἔζησεν ἐτῶν ..., with genitive instead of accusative, apparently due to confusion with the descriptive genitive which would be used without ἔζησεν. But we also find the following: ἐνθάδε κεῖται ... Ἰουλία ἐτῶν ἑννέα καὶ μῆνας ἑννέα. This is a confusion of 2 formulas: (a) here lies Julia of 9 years and 9 months (genit.); and (b) here lies Julia who lived 9 years and 9 months (accus.).⁵¹

Finally, we find some oddities like dative for nominative: ἐνθάδε κεῖται Εὐτυχιάνῳ ἄρχοντι συμβίῳ ἀξιῶ, probably again a mixing up of 2 well-known formulas: (a) here lies E. (nomin.); and (b) for E. (dat.; many short epitaphs contain only a name in the dative).⁵² Also accusative for nominative: ἐν εἰρήνῃ τὴν κοίμησιν αὐτῆς; but here we may consider the possibility that, whereas in the standard formula ἐν εἰρήνῃ ἢ κοίμησις αὐτοῦ the verb to be supplet is εἶη, in the case where κοίμησις is in the accusative the verb to be supplet is probably δῶη, with God as grammatical subject. This is speculative, but the fact that in *JWE* II 25 the father of a young boy prays, νῦν, δέσποτα, ἐν εἰρήνῃ κοίμησιν αὐτοῦ, lends some support to this hypothesis, since the father seems to ask the Lord to grant the boy his sleep in peace.⁵³

H.J. Leon concludes from his study of the Roman inscriptions that “there must have been a distressingly large percentage of [Jewish] individuals with little or no education”.⁵⁴ This is a doubtful statement since lack of orthograph-

49 G. Mussies, *The Morphology of Koine Greek* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 92–94.

50 Leon, *Jews* 85, refers to many inscriptions in Rome with ὅστις as relative pronoun. G. Mussies, ‘Greek in Palestine and the Diaspora,’ in S. Safrai—M. Stern (eds.), *The Jewish People in the First Century* (CRINT 1 2; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1976), 1044 n. 1, suggests that τίς pro ὅς may be a Latinism (*qui*); but see Brixhe, *Essai sur le grec anatolien* 84.

51 Müller—Bees, *Inscripfen* 111, and Leon, *Jews* 86.

52 As a matter of fact, in the pagan Greek tomb-inscriptions from Rome the name of the deceased is more often in the dative than in the nominative or genitive; see I. Kajanto, *A Study of the Greek Epitaphs of Rome* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1963), 7–8, 16–25.

53 See also U. Fischer, *Eschatologie und Jenseitserwartung im hellenistischen Diasporajudentum* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1978), 218.

54 Leon, *Jews* 78. Jonathan Smith’s remark that the Jewish inscriptions are ‘relentlessly elite’

ical precision is not necessarily a proof of lack of education. Moreover, we do not know to whom the wrong spellings should be attributed: to the family of the deceased or to the mason who actually engraved the text on the stone? But Leon rightly concludes that the Jews formed no linguistic island, for neither in their pronunciation of the Greek nor in their grammatical usage did they differ in any demonstrable way from the other Greek-speaking groups of the Mediterranean world of the Imperial period. "There is no evidence whatever of a Judeo-Greek or Judeo-Latin in any respect comparable with the Yiddish or Ladino of later times."⁵⁵

is odd and unjustified; see his 'Fences and Neighbors,' in W.S. Green (ed.), *Approaches to Ancient Judaism* 11 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1980), 24 n. 34.

55 Leon, *Jews* 92.

Selected Inscriptions

In this Appendix the reader will find a modest anthology of ancient Jewish inscriptions in their original languages and an English translation. The texts will be provided with some brief explanatory notes meant to facilitate reading of these inscriptions by beginning students. For detailed commentaries, however, those interested have to be referred to the standard editions mentioned at the beginning of each new entry. The inscriptions were selected with the following criteria in mind. There should be little or no doubt about their Jewishness. They should offer more than just a few letters or only a name. Hence the more substantial inscriptions are somewhat overrepresented in this collection. They should also offer some interesting insights into Jewish life and thought in the period concerned. Further they should give the reader an impression of the wide variety in form and content that these testimonies in stone evince. If this selection of inscriptions acts as an appetizer, the wish of the present writer has been fulfilled.

The texts will be printed here in the orthography in which they have been written on the stones, that is, without any correction in spelling or grammar. Hebrew and Aramaic have been transliterated. In the Greek texts, however, accents, breathings, subscript iotas, word-divisions, and interpunction have been added by me. That is to say, when the reader sees ἐνθάδε κεῖται, what is actually written on the stone is ΕΝΘΑΔΕΚΕΙΤΑΙ, and ἐν εἰρήνῃ ἡ κοίμησις αὐτοῦ is written as ΕΝΕΙΡΗΝΗΗΚΟΙΜΗΣΙΣΑΥΤΟΥ. Existing translations have been used where possible (mostly those of the standard editions), but often adapted or corrected. In order to enable the reader to discern what is preserved text and what is reconstruction by epigraphists, I present here a list of the current diacritical signs which are nowadays used in classical epigraphy and papyrology. It is called the Leiden system and comprises the following signs:

- (ααα) = resolution of an abbreviation
- {ααα} = cancelled by the editor of the text
- [ααα] = lacuna in the inscription
- [[ααα]] = deletion in the original
- ⟨ααα⟩ = omission in the original
- ααα = uncertain letters
- ... = illegible letters

1 *CIIP 2: Jerusalem, First Century CE*

- μηθένα ἀλλογενῇ εἰσπο—
 2. ρεύεσθαι ἐντὸς τοῦ πε—
 ρὶ τὸ ἱερὸν τρυφάκ—
 4. του καὶ περιβόλου· ὃς δ' ἂν λη—
 φθῇ ἑαυτῷ αἴτιος ἔσ—
 6. ται διὰ τὸ ἐξακολουθεῖν θάνατον.

No foreigner is to enter within the balustrade and forecourt around the sacred precinct. Whoever is caught will himself be responsible for his consequent death.

This marble slab with seven lines of Greek text was one of an unknown number of Greek (and Latin?) warning inscriptions on the balustrade (τρυφάκτος) that separated the outermost court (περίβολος) of the Jerusalem temple complex, where non-Jews were allowed to enter, from the innermost court and the sanctuary (ἱερὸν), where they were not. Josephus, who had been a priest in the Jerusalem temple, mentions these inscriptions twice, in *Bel. Jud.* 5.194 and *Ant. Jud.* 15.417, where he uses the terms ἀλλόφυλος and ἀλλοεθνής for non-Jews (ἀλλογενής in our inscription has the same meaning: someone of another nation). Line 1: μηθένα = μηδένα. Lines 6–7: διὰ τὸ ἐξακολουθεῖν θάνατον leaves unclear whether this death would be a consequence of regular jurisdiction or of mob violence (cf. Acts 21:27–36).

2 *CIIP 9: Jerusalem, First Century CE*

- Θεόδοτος Ουεττήνου, ἱερεὺς καὶ
 2. ἀρχισυνάγωγος, υἱὸς ἀρχισυν[αγώ-]
 γου, υἱωνὸς ἀρχισυν[α]γώγου, ᾠκο-
 4. δόμησε τὴν συναγωγὴν εἰς ἀνά[γ]νω-
 σ[ι]ν νόμου καὶ εἰς [δ]ιδαχ[ή]ν ἐντολῶν, καὶ
 6. τ[δ]ν ξενῶνα κα[ὶ τὰ] δώματα καὶ τὰ χρη-
 σ[τ]ήρια τῶν ὑδάτων, εἰς κατάλυμα τοῖ-
 8. ς χρήζουσιν ἀπὸ τῆς ξέ[ν]ης ἣν ἐθεμε-
 λ[ι]ωσαν οἱ πατέρες αὐτοῦ καὶ οἱ πρε-
 10. σ[β]ύτεροι καὶ Σιμωνίδης.

Theodotus, son of Vettenus, priest and head of the synagogue, son of a head of the synagogue, grandson of a head of the synagogue, built the synagogue for the reading of the Law and teaching of the commandments, and the guest-house and the other rooms and the water installations (?) for the lodgings of those who are in need of it from abroad, which [= the synagogue] his forefathers, the elders and Simonides founded.

This inscription was found close to the Temple Mount and it is the only physical trace of a synagogue in Jerusalem before 70 CE. The building was primarily intended, as is explicitly stated, for reading of and instruction in the Torah, but apparently it also had lodging facilities for pilgrims from abroad. The fact that the Temple and the synagogue were probably located almost adjacent to each other implies that there was no competition between the two institutions. The spelling of the inscription is remarkably correct. Lines 6–7: χρηστήρια τῶν ὑδάτων is a vague term but probably it refers to a cistern or another aquatic system for ritual purification and personal needs.

3 *CIIP* 98: Jerusalem, First Century BCE–CE

- ὀστατῶν τοῦ Νεικά–
 2. νορος Ἀλεξανδρέως
 ποιήσαντος τὰς θύρας.
 4. *Nqnr 'lks'* [Hebrew]

Ossuary of Nicanor the Alexandrian who made the gates.

Nikanor the Alexandrian (or: Nikanor (and) Alexa) [in Hebrew]

Line 1: ὀστατῶν is probably an otherwise unattested word for ossuary, comparable to ὀστοθήκη or ὀστοφάγος. Another possibility is to parse the word as ὀστᾶ τῶν (τοῦ Νεικάνορος), ‘the bones of those (of Nicanor)’, in which case it would be the ossuary of Nicanor’s children (perhaps those named Nicanor and Aleksa in line 4?). Line 3: The phrase ‘who made the gates’ makes it very probable that this is the same person who is mentioned in early rabbinic literature as Nicanor of Alexandria who was aided by God in bringing his eponymous bronze “Gate of Nicanor” to the Jerusalem temple (m.*Midd.* 1.4; 2.3; t.*Yoma* 2.3–4; b.*Yoma* 38a). This is one of the very rare inscriptions in which a Jewish person is mentioned that is also known from literary sources (the Jerusalem tomb with inscribed ossuaries of the Caiaphas family is perhaps another instance).

4 *CIIP* 54: Jerusalem, First Century CE

<i>Smwn bnh hklh</i>	סמון בנה הכלה
2. <i>Smwn</i>	סמון
<i>bn' hklh</i> [Aramaic]	בנא הכלה

Simon, builder of the sanctuary.

Simon, builder of the sanctuary.

This ossuary was inscribed with the same text on both one of the two long sides and one of the two short sides. It is striking that the common Hebrew and Aramaic name Shim'on (Simeon), although written in Hebrew characters, is spelled here in the form of the common Greek name Simon (the text has a *samekh*, not a *shin*, and it lacks the *'ayin*). Why that is so is impossible to say. Both *bn'* and *bnh* are Aramaic present participles of the verb *bn̄y*, to build. Like the Nicanor inscription (see the previous item), it mentions the deceased's secular profession, which is rather exceptional, especially in Palestine (but in the diaspora as well functions in the synagogue are mentioned much more frequently on tombstones than secular professions). Since, however, the 'sanctuary' (*hekhalah*) is most probably the Jerusalem Temple, it may well be that his building effort was seen as a religious activity. As the editors in *CIIP* say, 'builder' does not *per se* imply that Simon was the main architect; he may also have been one of the craftsmen or engineers in King Herod's prestigious enterprise. The building (actually rebuilding) of the Temple complex took some 80 years (roughly 20 BCE–60 CE).

5 *CIIP* 55: Jerusalem, 2nd–1st Century BCE

<i>ʾnh ʾbh br khnh ʾ-</i>	אנה אבה בר כהנה א
2. <i>lʾz br ʾhrn rbh ʾn-</i>	לעז בר אהרן רבה אנ
<i>h ʾbh mʾnyh mrd-</i>	ה אבה מעניה מרר
4. <i>ph dy ylyd byrwšlm</i>	פה די יליד בירושלם
<i>wglʾ lbbʾ wʾsq lmtt-</i>	וגלא לבבל ואסק למתת
6. <i>y br yhw d wqbrth bm-</i>	י בר יהוד וקברתה במ
<i>ʾrth dzbnt bgth [Aramaic]</i>	ערתה דזבנת בגטה

I, Abba, son of the priest Eleaz(ar), son of Aharon the elder [or: the Great],
 I, Abba, the afflicted (and) the persecuted, who was born in Jerusalem and
 exiled to Babylon, I brought up Matatai, son of Yehud, and buried him in
 the cave which I bought by a deed.

This is a very unusual and enigmatic Jewish tomb inscription. It was found in a rock-cut burial cave on Givʾat ha-Mivtar. Although in Aramaic, it is written in palaeo-Hebrew script, which suggests that the author may have been a Samaritan (Samaritans retained to this archaic script), but there is nothing else that points to a Samaritan provenance, on the contrary (a Samaritan birth and/or burial in Jerusalem is wellnigh unimaginable). The use of the palaeo-Hebrew script is rather a sign of patriotic sentiments as is also the case on the coins of the two Jewish rebellions against Rome. It seems that Abba was a member of an important priestly family, but it remains totally unclear why he was ‘afflicted and persecuted’ (his ‘exile to Babylon’ is not a reference to the biblical Babylonian exile!). Also his precise relationship with Matatai (or Matatiah = Mattityahu) remains obscure. The emphasis on the fact that he bought the burial cave ‘by a deed’ was directed against people who might dispute Abba’s ownership rights. The syntax of this long Aramaic sentence is quite rambling (for grammatical details see the commentary in *CIIP*).

6 CIIP 566: Jerusalem, First Century BCE–CE

Μαριάμη Ἐλεαζάρ–
ου καὶ θυγατέρες αὐτῇ[ς].

Mariame, wife (daughter?) of Eleazar, and her daughters.

Μαριάμη is one of the ways to make the Hebrew name *Mirjam* declinable in Greek, Μαρία being the other one (also the Hebrew name *ʿElʿazar* is made declinable here). She most probably was the wife of Eleazar, the father of the daughters mentioned in line 2, but it cannot be wholly ruled out that she was Eleazar's daughter. The relatively large size of the ossuary (71 × 38 × 29 cm) suggests that from the start it was meant to contain the bones of more than one person. Did the mother and her daughters die at the same time? And why are the names of the daughters not mentioned? We simply do not know.

7 *CIIP 348: Jerusalem, First Century CE*

- 'ly'zr
2. *br l'zr* [Aramaic]

אליעזר
בר אלעזר

- Ἐλιέζρος
4. Ἐλεα—
ζάρου

Eliezer son of Elazar
Eliezros son of Eleazaros

This ossuary inscription is interesting for several reasons. It is bilingual. The family of the deceased person found it important to record his name not only in their native Aramaic but also in Greek, apparently because the Greek language was important to these Jerusalemites. It is important in this context to bear in mind that almost 40% of all Jewish ossuaries from the Jerusalem area with inscriptions are inscribed with Greek texts. The relatives of the deceased emphasized their knowledge of the Greek language also by not just transcribing his name (which would make it undeclinable, as is so often the case in the LXX) but by affixing Greek nominative and genitive endings to it (thus making it declinable). Moreover, the Greek transcripton makes clear that the Hebrew/Aramaic names Eliezer and Eleazar, although originally they were versions of the same name, were pronounced differently. In the New Testament this name appears in the abbreviated form Lazarus.

8 **BS 2.127: Beth She'arim, Galilee, 3rd Century CE**

- Κεῖμαι Λεοντεΐδης νέκυσ Σαφο[ύς υἱὸς Ἰοῦ]στος,
 2. ὅς πάσης σοφίης δρεψάμενος κ[αρπὸ]ν
 λείψα φάος, δειλ[οὺς γ]ονέας ἀκα[χημέν]ους αἰε[ί],
 4. αὐτοκασιγνήτους τε, οἵμοι, ἐ[ν οἷς Β]εσάρ[οις],
 καὶ γ' ἐλθ[ὼν ε]ἰς Ἀθην Ἰοῦστο[ς ... αὐτ]όθι κείμα[ι].
 6. σὺν πολλοῖσιν ἐοῖς, ἐπὶ ᾗθελε Μοῖρα κραταιή.
 Θάρσει, Ἰοῦστε, οὐδεὶς ἀθάνατος.

I, Justus, the son of Leontios, the son of Sappho, lie here dead,
 I who, having plucked the fruit of all (kinds of) wisdom,
 Left the light, (and left) my poor parents in endless mourning,
 And my brothers too, alas, in my Beth She'arim.
 And having gone to Hades, I, Justus, lie here
 With many of my own kindred, since mighty Fate so willed.
 Be of good courage, Justus, no one is immortal!

These seven lines consist of a six-line poem in dactylic hexameters and pentameters in the old Homeric dialect plus a final line in prose. Poetic epitaphs were a current genre in Greek culture. We have some 20 Jewish instances, most of which are from Leontopolis in Egypt.

Line 1: Λεοντεΐδης is an epic form for 'son of Leontios' (cf. *Atreidês* for 'son of Atreus' = Agamemnon). Line 2: 'All (kinds of) wisdom' (πάση σοφίῃ can mean both 'all wisdom' and 'all sorts of wisdom') seems to indicate that it was not only Jewish wisdom (perhaps Torah study?) but also Greek learning that Justus had been involved in. Line 3: λείψα lacks the augment (as often in epic poetry) and has the late Greek sigmatic aorist form: ἔλειψα instead of ἔλιπον. Line 6: 'Mighty Moira' is a reference to the Greek goddess of Fate (Moira), but whether the Jew Justus (or his relatives) believed that Moira was a goddess is questionable; it may have been no more than a poetic expression for the common lot of humankind (see the following line). Line 7: The final prose expression "Keep courage, nobody is immortal" occurs very often in pagan epitaphs and its sense is much debated. It is very difficult to say what in each individual case may have been the associations this formula evoked. At first sight it may seem to be an expression of resignation: no one is immortal, death is common to all people, so try to be courageous in the face of the inevitable. It is quite possible that such sentiments existed among Jews, who definitely did not all believe in immortality of the soul or resurrection of the body. However, the exhortation to keep courage may also imply that the reason to keep courage is that there is life after death.

9 **BS 2.129: Beth She'arim, Galilee, 3rd Century CE**

- οὐμύρι[ι]
 2. ἐγὼ Ἡσύχης ἐνθάδε κίμε σὺν τῇ ἐμῇ συνβίῳ.
 πᾶς τολμῶν ἀνύξε ἐφ' [ῆ]μάς μὴ ἔχῃ μέρος εἰς τὸν
 4. [βίον] ἀόνιο[ν]

Have a good share!

I, Hesychi(u)s, lie here with my wife. May anyone who dares to open (this grave) above us not have a share in the eternal life.

Line 1: οὐμύρι = εὐμοίρει. The word is from a later hand than the rest of the text. The wish εὐμοίρει ('have a good share/portion'), with which the deceased is bid farewell, occurs remarkably frequently in Beth She'arim (as does the adjective εὐμοιρος). To be sure, the formula is not of Jewish origin; it is found often in pagan Hellenistic epitaphs, where it wishes the dead a happy hereafter. In a Jewish context, the formula took on a new value. In an early rabbinic formula in the Mishna treatise *Sanhedrin* 10.1, we read: "All Israelites have a share in the world to come" (*kol Yisra'el yeš lahem cheleq le'olam habba'*). 'Share', *cheleq*, became a technical term for a happy afterlife. The associations with *cheleq* (share) evoked by the (pagan) wish εὐμοίρει, in which the element μοίρα (share, portion) was well recognizable, might explain the popularity of that wish among Jews. The link of the wish εὐμοίρει with the rabbinic statement in m.*Sanh.* 10.1 is made almost explicit in lines 3–4, where we find a partial Greek translation of this rabbinic formula (μέρος = μοίρα = *cheleq*). The great frequency of εὐμοίρει in Beth She'arim (see BS 11 nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 13, 26, 27, 33, 47, 52, 56, 57, 69, 124, 129, 130, 171, 173, 187) could be explained along these lines. If this thesis is correct, then we may regard all εὐμοίρει inscriptions of Beth She'arim as testimonies of belief in a life in the world to come, albeit of an unspecified nature. Line 2: κίμε = κείμει. Line 3: ἀνύξε = ἀνοίξει. Line 4: ἀόνιον = αἰώνιον.

10 **BS 2.183: Beth She‘arim, Galilee, 3rd Century CE**

- Καρτερίης τόδε σῆμα λείψανον φέρει φθιτὸν
 2. ἄφθιτον ἤε λαμπρὰν σῶζον μνίαν γεναίης.
 θήκατο δέ μιν ἐνθάδε Ζηνοβία
 4. μητέρος ἐῆς τίουσα [ἐφ]ημοσύνας.
 τοῦτό σοι, μακαρτάτη, καρπὸς σὸς ἐδίματο
 6. ἦν τέκες ἐξ ἀγανῶν εὐσεβίην λαγόνων,
 ῥέζει γὰρ κλυτὰ ἔργα ἐνὶ φθιμένοις αἰεῖ,
 8. ὄφρα δὴ ἄμφω καὶ μετὰ τέρμα βίου
 νέον ἢδ' ἀσχύλευτον αὖθις ἔχοιτε πλοῦτον.

This tomb contains the dwindling remains of Karteria,
 preserving forever the illustrious memory of a noble woman.
 Zenobia brought her here for burial,
 fulfilling thus her mother's request.

For you, most blessed of women, your offspring,
 whom you bore from your gentle womb, your pious daughter
 —for she always does actions praiseworthy in the eyes of mortals—
 built this monument, so that even after the end of life's term
 both of you may enjoy again new and indestructible riches.

This poetic epitaph is metrically very deficient (there is an intermingling of dactyls and trochees and the length of syllables is often ignored), but the spelling is correct apart from thrice *iota* instead of *ei* (1, 2, 5). Lines 1–4 contain a statement about mother and daughter, lines 5–7 address the mother, lines 8–9 address both mother and daughter. Again there is much Homeric phraseology and diction (ἄφθιτος, ἤε, τίω, ἐός, ῥέζω, κλυτὰ ἔργα, ὄφρα, etc.). In line 1 σῆμα for ‘tomb’ is also Homeric. Lines 1–2: Note how the λείψανον φθιτὸν (dwindling remains) is contrasted with the ἄφθιτος μνεία (perennial memory/monument). The idea that the tomb or tombstone is intended to perpetuate the memory of the deceased is originally Greek, but here adopted in pious Jewish circles. Pride in the splendor of the tomb is a postbiblical development in Judaism. Line 4: τίω = τιμάω. Line 6: Here Zenobia is called ‘pious’ because she always performs ‘praiseworthy deeds’ (κλυτὰ ἔργα), in this case especially the proper burial of her mother in the way this woman had asked her daughter to do. Line 9: The first editors take the ‘new and indestructible riches’ to be the splendid tomb of Karteria, but it seems much more probable to see this as a reference to the ‘treasure in heaven’ that ‘neither moth nor rust’ can destroy and no thieves can steal (Matt. 6:20), that is, eternal life. Graves were far from being ‘indestructible.’

11 *JIGRE 33: Leontopolis, Egypt, Second–First Century BCE*

- Ἀρσινόης τάφος οὗτος, ὁδοιπόρε· κλαῦσον ἐπιστάς
 2. τὴν κατὰ πάντα ἀτυχὴν, δύσμορον, αἰνόμορον.
 ὀρφανικὴ λείφθην γὰρ ἐγὼ μαικρά περ ἐούσα
 4. μητρός· ἐπεὶ δέ μ' ἀκμῆς ἄνθος ἐνυμφοκόμει,
 ἔξευξέν με Φαβεῖτι πατήρ, ὠδεῖνι δὲ Μοῖρα
 6. πρωτοτόκου με τέκνου πρὸς τέλος ἤγε βίου.
 καὶ μείκρον μὲν ἐγὼ τ' ἔλαχον κύκλον, ἀλλὰ χάρις μοι
 8. πλείστη ἐπένθησεν καλλοσύνηι πραπίδων·
 καὶ τάφος ἐν κόλπῳ κρύπτει τὸ ἐμὸν δέμας οὗτος
 10. ἀγνωστὰ φές, ψυχὴ δ' εἰς ὁσίους ἔπετε.
 Ἀρσινόης ἐπικήδειος· (ἔτους) κε' Μεχεῖρ β'.

This is the grave of Arsinoe, wayfarer. Stand near and weep for her, who was unfortunate in all things, whose fate was adverse and terrible. For I was bereaved of my mother when I was a little girl; and when the flower of youth dressed me as a bride, my father joined me in marriage with Phabeis, and Fate led me to the end of life in the travail-pain of my first-born child. My allotted span was small, but great charm bloomed upon the beauty of my spirit. Now this grave hides in its bosom my chastely-nurtured body, but my soul has flown to the holy ones. A lament for Arsinoe. In the 25th year, Mecheir 2.

One of the striking characteristics of many ancient epitaphs (pagan, Jewish and Christian) is that they invite, or even command, the stranger or passer-by to stop, to read the epitaph, and to share in the grief. Both Greek and Latin epitaphs abound in expressions designed to attract the attention of the wayfarer, to make him or her at least read the name on the stone, to have some value attached to that name and keep it alive in his consciousness for a while. Most often there is the pretence that the dead person, through his epitaph, addresses the traveller. There are also several Jewish instances of this genre. Line 1: The name Arsinoe was popular, also among Jews, as it was the name of the Ptolemaic queen Arsinoe II (who died in 270 BCE). Line 2: ἀτυχὴν for classical ἀτυχῇ. Line 3: As in line 7, ἐγὼι has a false iota. Line 4: ἀκμῆς ἄνθος, 'the flower of prime,' is a frequently used metaphor for the marriageable age. Line 5: ὠδεῖνι = ὠδῖνι. Moira as the goddess of Fate is, since Homer, the bringer of death; she is also mentioned in a metaphorical way in *BS* II 127 (see above). Line 8: ἐπένθησεν = ἐπήνησεν (from ἐπανθῆω). In view of the several false datives in this poem it is hard to determine whether πλείστηι and καλλοσύνηι are datives or nominatives.

Here *πλείστη* is taken to be a nominative and belong to *χάρις* and *καλλοσύνη* to be a dative. But others construe as follows: “But a great favour I had: the beauty of my spirit blossomed,” taking *καλλοσύνη* as a nominative as well. Line 10: *ἀγνο-τραφής*, here used of Arsinoe’s body, most probably refers to her chastity and is a poetic variation of *ἀγνός* (pure, chaste). *ἔπετε* is an irregular form of *πέτομαι* (as if from *πέτω*) rather than from *ἐπομαι* (= *ἔπεται*). The flight of the soul to the holy (or pious) ones implies God’s gathering of his people into eternal life where the already deceased pious live in beatitude. This is more often expressed as ‘sleep with the righteous ones.’ Line 11: *Μεχέρ* = February (Egyptian).

12 **JIGRE 34: Leontopolis, Egypt, First–Second Century CE**

- εἰμὲι ἐγὼ Ἰησοῦς, ὁ φύς δὲ Φαμίς, παροδεῖτα,
 2. ἐξήκοντα ἐτῶν ἦλθον δ' εἰς Ἀείδαν·
 κλαύσατε δὴ ἅμα πάντας τὸν ἐξαπίνης μεταβάντα
 4. εἰς μυχὸν αἰώνων ἐν σκοτίᾳ διάγειν.
 καὶ σὺ δέ, Δωσίθεε, κατάκλαέ με· σοὶ γὰρ ἀνάνκη
 6. δάκρισι πικροτάτοις τύμβω ἐμῷ προχέειν·
 τέκνον ἐμοὶ εἰ σ[ύ], ἐγὼ γὰρ ἀπῆλθον ἄτεκ(ν)ος·
 8. κλαύσατε πάντες ὁμοῦ Ἰησὸν δυσμενέα.

I am Jesus, my father was Phameis, passer-by,
 I went to Hades when I was sixty years old.
 Weep together all of you for the one who has suddenly gone
 to the deep place of eternity, to dwell in darkness.
 You too, Dositheus, weep for me, for it is your duty
 to pour libations of bitterest tears upon my tomb.
 You are my child, for I have departed childless.
 Weep, all together, for Jesus, the hapless.

This poetic epitaph is written in alternating hexameters and pentameters (although they are often quite defective). In a typically Hellenistic form the poem addresses the passer-by. Line 1: εἰμὲι = εἰμί. Jesus was a very common name among Jews in post-biblical antiquity. The father (φύς = φύσας) of Jesus has an Egyptian name (elsewhere spelled as Παμήης). Line 2: the age of the deceased is indicated not by words but by the figure for 60. Hades, originally the god of the netherworld, is here just a designation of the grave or of *post mortem* existence. Line 3: πάντας stands for πάντες (see line 8), a vulgarism caused by the fact that the endings of the nominative and the accusative plural tended to merge in Koine Greek. In other epitaphs from Leontopolis as well, the wayfarer is often called upon to weep. Organized mourning at funerals belonged to both Greek and Jewish culture. Line 4 makes clear that the expectation of post-mortal existence here scarcely differs from the Old Testament view of the gloomy *she'ol*. Line 5: ἀνάνκη = ἀνάγκη. Lines 5–7 probably address Jesus' foster child or adopted son (Dositheus), whom he, a childless man, regards as his own child. Line 7: The engraver wrote ἄτεκος for ἄτεκνος. Line 8: δυσμενής usually means 'hostile', which is impossible here. Possibly it means 'without μένος' in the sense of vital force, vitality, happiness; hence the translation 'hapless.'

13 **JIGRE 38: Leontopolis, Egypt, 2nd Century BCE–2nd Century CE**

- στάλα μανύτειρα.—τίς ἐν κυαναυγεί τύμβῳ
 2. κείσαι; καὶ πάτραι καὶ γενέτην ἔνεπε.—
 Ἀρσινόα, κούρα δ' Ἀλίνης καὶ Θεδοσίοιο,
 4. φαισθὰ δ' Ὀνίου γὰ τροφὸς ἀμετέρα.—
 ποσσαέτης δ' ὠλισθας ὑπὸ σκοτόεν κλίμα Λάθας;—
 6. ἰκοσέτης γοερὸν χῶρον ἔβην νεκύων.—
 ζευγίσθης δὲ γάμος;—ζεύχθην.—κατελίνπανες αὐτῷ
 8. τέκνον;—ἄτεκνος ἔβαν εἰς Ἀἴδαο δόμους.—
 ἦ σοι κοῦφα χθῶν ἀφθιμένοιο φυλάκτωρ.—
 10. καὶ σοί, ξεῖνε, φέροι καρπὸν ἀπὸ σταχύων.
 (ἔτους) ἰς Παῦνι κα'.

The stele bears witness: 'Who are you that lie in the dark tomb? Tell me also your country and your parentage.'—'(I am) Arsinoe, daughter of Aline and The(o)dosius, and the land which nourished us is called the land of Onias.'—'How old were you when you slipped down into the dark region of Lethe?'—'At twenty years old I went to the mournful place of the dead.'—'Were you joined in marriage?'—'Yes, I was.'—'Did you leave him a child?'—'No, childless I went to the house of Hades.'—'May the earth, the guardian of the dead, be light upon you.'—'And for you, stranger, may it bear fruitful crops.'—In the sixteenth year, Payni 21.

This metrical epitaph in the Doric dialect is a good example of the typically Greek genre of the 'speaking stone' with a dialogue between the deceased person and a passer-by. Line 4: The deceased young woman, Arsinoe, was born and raised in 'the land of Onias,' i.e., Onias IV, the Jewish highpriest who fled to Egypt in the middle of the second century BCE where he obtained a stretch of land to live in with his followers and where he built a rival Jewish temple in Leontopolis (Tell el-Yehoudieh) that remained in service till 73 CE. Line 5: The region of Lethe (κλίμα Λάθας) is the underworld, where Lethe is the name of the river of forgetfulness that every deceased person has to drink from. All those who drank from it experienced complete forgetfulness of their former lives. Line 9: The wish that the earth may be light (*sit tibi terra levis*) is common in ancient epitaphs. Line 11: Payni = June (Egyptian).

14 *JIGRE 39: Leontopolis, Egypt, Early Imperial Period(?)*

- πεντήκοτα τριῶν ἐτέων κύκλον ἦδ' ἀνύσαντα
 2. αὐτὸς ὁ πανδαμάτωρ ἦρπασεν εἰς Αἴδην.
 ὦ χθὼν ἀμμοφανής, οἶον δέμας ἀμφικαλύπτεις
 4. Ἀβράμου ψυχῆς τοῦ μακαριστοτάτου.
 οὐκ ἀγέραςτος ἔφυ γὰρ ἀνὰ πτόλιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀρχῇ
 6. πανδήμῳ ἐθνικῇ ἐστέφετ' ἐν σοφίᾳ·
 δισσών γάρ τε τόπων πολιταρχῶν αὐτὸς ἐτειμῶ
 8. τὴν διμερῆ δαπάνην ἐξανύσας χάρισιν.
 πάντα δέ σοι, ἐπέοιχ' ὅσα τοι, ψυχῇ, πρὶν ἔκευθες,
 10. καὶ τέκνων ἀγαθῶν αὖξομεν γενεή.
 ἀλλὰ σύ, ὦ παροδείτα, ἰδὼν ἀγαθοῦ τάφον ἀνδρός
 12. ὃν τε κατευφημῶν τοῖα φράσας ἄπιθι·
 γαίαν ἔχοις ἐλαφρὰν εἰς τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον.

When he had already achieved a span of 53 years,
 the all-subduer himself snatched him off to Hades.
 O sandy earth, what a body you cover,
 that of the soul of the most fortunate Abramós.
 For he was not without honour in the city, but wore the wreath
 of magistracy over all the people in his wisdom.
 For you were honoured with the magistracy in two places,
 generously fulfilling the double expense.
 And all things that befitted you, o soul, before you hid yourself,
 we, your family of good children, are increasing.
 But you, passer-by, seeing the grave of a good man,
 say these favourable words to him when you depart:
 'May the earth be light upon you for all time.'

In lines 1–6 we are informed about Abramós (a hellenized Abraham) in the third person; in lines 7–10, Abramós is addressed in the second person; and in lines 11–13 the passer-by is addressed (albeit that he/she in turn has to address Abramós again with the good wish of line 13). It has plausibly been suggested that Abramós was the head of two local Jewish communities. Notable is the absence of any expression of belief in life after death, even in the case of an honoured community leader. Line 1: *πεντήκοτα* is an indication of the dropping of the (final) *nun* in vulgar pronunciation (note also the two cases of itacism in lines 3 and 7: *ἀμμοφανής* and *ἐτειμῶ*). Line 2: *πανδαμάτωρ* is often used as an epithet of time (or the personified *Χρόνος*), fate, or death. Line 3: *ἀμμοφανής*

is a *hapax* but well-chosen in view of the bright yellow sand in the Egyptian desert. Note the distinction between body and soul here. Line 4: μακάρ and μακαριστότατος are frequently used of the dead. Lines 5–6: ἀρχῇ depends on ἐστέφετο, he was honoured (lit. crowned with a wreath) with a magistracy over the whole community (ἀρχῇ πάνδημος ἐθνική belonging together; ἔθνος is frequently used to designate a Jewish community, cf. ethnarch). Line 7: πολιταρχῶν probably means that Abraham was the head of the πολίτευμα of the Jews in Leontopolis. Lines 9–10 are obscure and hard to translate; Lewis' translation, 'everything which was fitting to your spirit', ignores the vocative character of ψυχῇ, which is often used as a term of affection when addressing the deceased. What is meant here is probably that Abramos' family members say that by erecting this grave monument and inscribing it with this poem they increase the fitting honour that he received during his life time. Line 13: The addition of this verse with the well-known wish '*sit tibi terra levis*' (more common in Latin epitaphs) has the poem end with two pentameters, which is very unusual.

15 IJO III Syr53: Apameia, Syria, End of the 4th Century

- ἐπὶ τῶν τιμιοτάτων ἀρχισυνα–
 2. γῶγων Εὐσεβίου καὶ Νεμίου καὶ Φινέου
 καὶ Θεοδώρου γερουσιάρχου καὶ τῶν
 4. τιμιοτάτων πρεσβυτέρων Εἰσακίου
 καὶ Σαούλου κ(α)ὶ λοιπῶν Ἰλάσιος ἀρχισυνά–
 6. γωγος Ἀντιοχέων ἐποίησεν ἰσόδον τοῦ
 ψηφίου πό(δας) ρν' · ἔτους γψ', Εὐδυνέου ζ'· εὐλογία πᾶσι.

In the time of the most honoured *archisynagogoi* Eusebius and Nehemiah and Phineas, and of Theodorus the *gerousiarch*, and of the most honoured elders Isaac and Saul and others, Ilasius, the *archisynagogos* of the Antiochenes, made the entrance of the mosaic for 150 feet. Year 703, Audynaïos 7. A blessing to all.

In the synagogue of the Syrian city of Apameia a huge mosaic floor (some 120 square meters) was uncovered as well as a series of inscriptions honouring the donors of the mosaic. Honorary donor inscriptions were also found in other synagogues in the Middle East, especially in Palestine. Although many synagogue mosaics exhibit figures of humans and animals, the one in Apameia consists entirely of geometric designs. It is striking that the largest part of the inscription (lines 1–5) consists of indications for its dating, primarily by giving details of Jewish officials, supplemented in line 7 by a dating according to the Seleucid era: November 392 CE. Lines 1–3: The mention of three 'leaders/heads of the synagogue' (*archisynagôgoi*) may imply that there were three synagogues in Apameia or else that the synagogue decorated with the mosaic had three leaders (or one current leader and two past ones). Lines 2–5: Four biblical names are here given in their hellenized form so as to make them declinable (Nehemiah [Νέμιας], Phinehas [Φίνεας], Isaac [Εἰσάκιος], and Saul [Σαούλος]). Lines 3–5: A *gerousiarch* was the chairman of the board of elders of the community, the *presbyteroi* mentioned in line 4. Lines 5–6: Ilasius, the most generous of all donors, may have been either the leader of a synagogue in Antioch on the Orontes or the head of a community of Antiochenes at Apameia. In another mosaic inscription (IJO III 54), several of Ilasius' family members are mentioned by name. The verb ἐποίησεν does not imply that Ilasius himself worked at the mosaic but only that he had it done and paid for it. Since in the just mentioned inscription IJO III 54 Ilasius is said to have made 'the mosaic of the entrance,' it is probable that this is meant here as well and that the artist made a mistake ('made the entrance of the

mosaic'). Line 7: Εὐδυνέος = Αὐδναῖος is November. The blessing formula εὐλογία πᾶσιν occurs frequently in both Jewish epitaphs and honorary inscriptions.

16 IJO III Syr80: Edessa (Urfa), Syria/Asia Minor, 2nd–4th Century

- [τ]οῦτο τὸ ἡρώι—
 2. [ο]ν <Σ>ε<λ>εύκου Ἰζά—
 [τ]ου καὶ Ἰαμίας Ἀ—
 4. [...] Σαμουήλου Γορ—
 [...] αἰγού Ἰουδέων.

This is the tomb of Seleucus (son) of Izates and Iamias (son) of A ... (and?) Samuel (son) of Gor(dianus?), Jews.

This inscription was found to the right of a door at the entrance of a passage leading to a tomb cut in the rock. To the right of the door was an Aramaic inscription with almost the same text. Greek inscriptions are rather rare in the area of Edessa where Aramaic/Syriac remained the dominant language. Line 1: ἡρώιον or ἡρώϊον originally meant a shrine of a hero, but in later times it became one of the many terms for tomb (the Aramaic has here *by'lm'* = *beth 'alema'*, eternal home); it is used in Jewish epitaphs in Asia Minor, probably without having pagan associations anymore. Line 2: The name Seleucus could be restored with certainty on the basis of the Aramaic counterpart of the inscription; it is the name of several kings of the famous dynasty of the Seleucids. Izates is the name of the king of Adiabene who converted to Judaism in the first century CE. We know only one other Jew bearing this name. The restoration of the names in lines 3–5 is uncertain, except for Samuel. Line 5: At the end, as in several other epitaphs from Asia Minor, but especially those in Phrygian Hierapolis, the persons mentioned here are emphatically identified as Jews (*Ioudaioi* is no longer 'Judaean').

17 *IJO II 168: Acmonia, Phrygia, 1st–2nd Century*

- τὸν κατασκευασθέντα ο[ἱ]κὸν ὑπὸ
 2. Ἰουλίας Σεουήρας Π. Τυρρώνιος Κλά-
 δος ὁ διὰ βίου ἀρχισυνάγωγος καὶ
 4. Λούκιος Λουκίου ἀρχισυνάγωγος
 καὶ Ποπίλιος Ζωτικὸς ἄρχων ἐπεσ-
 6. κεύασαν ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων καὶ τῶν συν-
 καταθεμένων καὶ ἔγραψαν τοὺς τοί-
 8. χους καὶ τὴν ὀροφὴν καὶ ἐποίησαν
 τὴν τῶν θυρίδων ἀσφάλειαν καὶ τὸν
 10. λυπὸν πάντα κόσμον. οὕστινας κα[ὶ]
 ἡ συναγωγὴ ἐτείμησεν ὅπλῳ ἐπιχρύ-
 12. σῳ διὰ τε τὴν ἐνάρετον αὐτῶν δι[α]θή[ε]-
 σιν καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὴν συναγωγὴν εὐνοιάν
 14. τε καὶ σ[τ]ουδὴν.

This building was erected by Julia Severa; P(ublius) Tyrronius Cladus, the head for life of the synagogue, and Lucius, son of Lucius, head of the synagogue, and Publius Zoticus, archon, restored it at their own expenses and with money which had been deposited, and they had the walls and the ceiling painted, and they reinforced the windows and made all the rest of the ornamentation. The synagogue honoured them with a gilded shield on account of their virtuous disposition, goodwill, and zeal for the synagogue.

Line 2: The synagogue that had to be restored was built by Julia Severa who was priestess of the cult of the Roman Emperor in Acmonia in the middle of the first century CE. So she played a prominent role in an important pagan cult in the city, but even so she had a warm interest in the local Jewish community (one may compare here the story in Luke, where the inhabitants of Capernaum tell Jesus about the Roman centurion: “He loves our people and built a synagogue for us” [7:5]). Julia Severa was an aristocratic lady (her son later became a senator in Rome), who had close connections with the prestigious Roman immigrant family of the Turronii; one of them, Turronius Rapo, was also a priest for the emperor cult, while another member of the same family, Turronius Cladus, is mentioned in line 2–3 as the ‘head of the synagogue’ (*archisynagōgos*) that had the renovations done; so he must have been a proselyte. All this testifies to the successful integration of the Jews of that city and of the sympathy they enjoyed among non-Jewish inhabitants. (The suggestion

that Julia Severa had converted to Judaism has no basis.) Line 5–6: ἐπισκευάζειν stands in contrast to κατασκευάζειν in line 1, the latter referring to the act of building, the former to that of restoration. Line 6–7: τὰ συνκαταθέμενα probably refers to money from the communal treasury. Lines 10–11: λυπόν = λοιπόν. ἐτείμησεν = ἐτίμησεν.

18 IJO II 14: Aphrodisias, Caria, 4th–5th Century

Side A

- θεός βοηθός, πατελλάδω[ν].
2. οί ύποτεταγμέ—
νοι τῆς δεκαν(ίας)
 4. τῶν φιλομαθῶ(ν)
τῶν κέ παντευλογ(ούντων?)
 6. εἰς ἀπενθησίαν
τῷ πλήθι ἔκτισα(ν)
 8. ἐξ ιδίων μνήμα·
Ἰαήλ προστάτης
 10. σὺν υἱῷ Ἰωσοῦα ἄρχ(οντι?)
Θεόδοτος παλατῖν(ος) σὺν
 12. υἱῷ Ἰλαριανῷ
Σαμουήλ ἀρχιδ(έκανος?) προσήλ(υτος)
 14. Ἰωσῆς Ἰεσσέου
Βενιαμὶν ψαλμο(λόγος)
 16. Ἰούδας εὐκόλος
Ἰωσῆς προσήλυ(τος)
 18. Σαββάτιος Ἀμαχίου
Ἐμμόνιος θεοσεβ(ής)
 20. Ἀντωνῖνος θεοσεβ(ής)
Σαμουήλ Πολιτιανοῦ
 22. Εἰωσήφ Εὐσεβίου προσή(λυτος)
κα[ι] Εἰοῦδας Θεοδώρ(ου)
 24. καὶ Ἀντιπέος Ἑρμῆ
καὶ Σαβάθιος νεκτάρης
 26. [κα]ι [[Σαμουήλ πρεσ—
βευτῆς ἱερεύς]]

Side B

- [.....]
2. [... Σ]εραπίωνος
[.....]
 4. [Ἰωσῆ]φ Ζήνωνος
[Ζή]νων Ἰακῶβ Μανάσης Ἰωφ
 6. Ἰούδας Εὐσεβίου

- Ἑορτάσιος Καλλικάρπου
8. Βιωτικός Ἰούδας Ἀμφιανοῦ
Εὐγένιος χρυσοχός
10. Πραοίλιος Ἰούδας Πραοιλίου
Ρούφος Ὀξυχόλιος γέρων
12. Ἀμάντιος Χαρίνου Μύρτιλος
Ἰακῶ προβατον(όμος) Σεβήρος
14. Εὐδοδος Ἰάσων Εὐόδου
Εὐσαββάθιος λαχα[νοπώλης] Ἀνύσιος
16. Εὐσαββάθιος ξένος Μίλων
Ὀξυχόλιος νεώτερος
18. Διογένης Εὐσαββάθιος Διογέν(ους)
Ἰούδας Παύλου Θεόφιλος
20. [Ἰ]ακῶβ ό κέ Ἀπελλί(ων?) Ζαχαρίας μονο(πώλης)
Λεόντιος Λεοντίου Γέμελλος
22. [Ἰο]ύδας Ἀχολίου Δαμόνικος
Εὐτάρκιος Ἰούδα Ἰωσήφ Φίληρ (...)
24. Εὐσαββάθιος Εὐγενίου
Κύρυλλος Εὐτύχιος χαλκο(τύπος?)
26. Ἰωσήφ παστι(λλάριος?) Ρουβήν παστι(λλάριος?)
Ἰούδας Ὀρτασί(ου) Εὐτύχιος ὀρν(ιθοπώλης?)
28. Ἰούδας ό κέ Ζωσι(?) Ζήνων γρυτ(οπώλης)
Ἀμμιανός χιλᾶς Αἰλιανός Αἰλιανοῦ
30. Αἰλιανός ό και Σαμουήλ Φιλάνθος
Γοργόνιος Ὀξυ(χολίου) Ἑορτάσιος Ἀχιλλέ(ως)
32. Εὐσαββάθιος Ὀξυ(χολίου) Παρηγόριος
Ἑορτάσιος Ζωτικοῦ Συμεών Ζην(?)
(several empty lines)
34. και ὅσοι θεοσεβίς· Ζήνων βουλ(ευτής)
Τέρτυλλος βουλ(ευτής) Διογένης βουλ(ευτής)
36. Ὀνήσιμος βουλ(ευτής) Ζήνων Λονγι(νοῦ?) βουλ(ευτής)
Ἀντιπέος βουλ(ευτής) Ἀντίοχος βουλ(ευτής)
38. Πῶμανος βουλ(ευτής) Ἀπονήριος βουλ(ευτής)
Ευπίθιος Πορφυρ(ᾶς) Στρατήγιος
40. Ξάνθος Ξάνθος Ξάνθου
Ἀπονήριος Ἀπον(ηρίου) Ὑψικλῆς Μελ(?)
42. Πολυχρόνιος Ξάνθου Ἀθηνίων Αἰ(λιανοῦ?)
Καλλίμορφος Καλ(λιμόρφου?) ΙΟΥΝΒΑΛΟΣ
44. Τύχικος Τυχί(κου) Γληγόριος Τυχί(κου)
Πολυχρόνιος βελ(?) Χρύσιππος

46. Γοργόνιος χαλ(κοτύπος) Τατιανός Ὁξυ(χολίου)
Ἀπελλᾶς Ἥγε(μονέως?) Βαλεριανός πενα(κᾶς)
48. Εὐσαββάθιος Ἡδ(υχρόος?) Μανίκιος Ἀττᾶ
Ὀρτάσιος λατύ(πος) Βραβεύς
50. Κλαυδιανός Καλ(λιμόρφου?) Ἀλέξανδρος Πυ[...
Ἀππιανός Λευ(?) Ἀδόλιος ἰσικιάριος
52. Ζωτικὸς ψελ(λός?) Ζωτικὸς γρύλλος
Εὐπίθιος Εὐπι(θίου) Πατρίκιος χαλκο(τύπος)
54. Ἐλπιδιανός ἀθλη(τῆς) Ἡδυχροῦς
Εὐτρόπιος Ἡδυχ(ρόος) Καλλίνικος
56. Βαλεριανός ἀρκά(ριος?) Εὐρετος Ἀθηναγ(όρου)
Παράμονος ἱκονο(γράφος)
58. Εὐτυχιανός γναφ(εύς) Προκόπιος τρα(πεζίτης?)
Προυνίκιος γναφ(εύς) Στρατόνικος γναφ(εύς)
60. Ἀθηναγόρας τέκτω(ν)
Μελίτων Ἀμαζόνιου.

Side A:

God is the helper who puts [food] on our plate(?).

Those listed below from the society of the Lovers of Knowledge, also known as Those Who Continuously Offer Praise, in order to alleviate suffering (?) built this memorial [or: burial place] for the community out of their own resources:

Jael, patron [or: president], with her/his son Joshua, leader; Theodotus, courtier, with his son Hilarianus; Samuel, chairman of the association, proselyte; Josés, son of Iesse; Benjamin, psalm-singer; Judas, the contented one; Josés, proselyte; Sabbatios, son of Amachios; Emmonius, God-fearer; Antoninus, Godfearer; Samuel, son of Politianus; Joseph, son of Eusebius, proselyte; and Judas, son of Theodorus; and Antipeos, son of Hermes; and Sabbathios, the sweet one(?); and Samuel, envoy (and) priest.

Side B:

Joseph, son of Zenon; Zenon, son of Jacob; Manasses, son of Joph (Job?); Judas, son of Eusebius; Heortasius, son of Kallikarpos; Biotikos; Judas, son of Amphianos; Eugenius, goldsmith; Praoilios; Judas, son of Praoilios; Rufus; Oxycholios senior; Amantius, son of Charinos; Myrtilos; Jaco, shepherd; Severus; Euodos; Jason, son of Euodos; Anysios; Eusabbathios,

foreigner; Milon; Oxycholios junior; Diogenes; Eusabbathios, son of Diogenes; Judas, son of Paulus; Theophilus; Jacob, also called Apellion; Zacharias, retailer(?); Leontius, son of Leontius; Gemellus; Judas, son of Acholios; Damonikos; Eutarkios, son of Judas; Joseph, son of Philer(iphos?); Eusabbathios, son of Eugenios; Cyrillus; Eutychius, bronze-(smith?); Joseph, confectioner; Ruben, confectioner; Judas, son of Hortasius; Eutychius, poulterer; Judas, also called Zosimus; Zenon, rag-dealer; Ammianus, dealer in horse-fodder(?); Aelianus, son of Aelianus; Aelianus, also called Samuel; Philanthos; Gorgonios, son of Oxycholios; Heortasius, son of Achilles; Eusabbathios, son of Oxycholios; Paregorios; Heortasius, son of Zotikos; Symeon, son of Zenon(?).

And those who are Godfearers: Zenon, city councillor; Tertullus, city councillor; Diogenes, city councillor; Onesimus, city councillor; Zenon, son of Longinus, city councillor; Antipeos, city councillor; Antiochus, city councillor; Romanos, city councillor; Aponerius, city councillor; Eupithios, purple-merchant; Strategius; Xanthos; Xanthos, son of Xanthos; Aponerius, son of Aponerius; Hypsicles, son of Melito(?); Polychronius, son of Xanthos; Athenion, son of Aelianus(?); Kallimorphos, son of Kallimorphos(?); IOUNBALOS(?); Tychicus, son of Tychicus; Glegorius [Gregorius], son of Tychicus; Polychronius, son of Bel(...?); Chrysippus; Gorgonios, coppersmith; Tatianus, son of Oxycholios; Apellas, son of Hegemon(...?); Valerianus, maker of wooden tablets(?); Eusabbathios, son of Hedychroos; Marcus Anikios, son of Attalos(?); Hortasius, stone-carver; Brabeus; Claudianus, son of Kallimorphos(?); Alexander, son of Py(...?); Appianus, son of Leu(...?); Adolios, mincemeat-maker; Zotikos, armlet-maker(?); Zotikos, dance performer(?); Eupithios, son of Eupithios; Patricius, coppersmith; Elpidianus, athlete; Hedychrous; Eutropius, son of Hedychrous; Kallinikos; Valerianus, treasurer; Heuretos, son of Athenagoras; Paramonos, maker/painter of images; Eutychianus, fuller; Procopius, money-changer(?); Prounikios, fuller; Stratonikos, fuller; Athenagoras, carpenter; Melito, son of Amazonius.

This donor inscription is one of the most sensational finds in the field of Jewish epigraphy of the last century. It is important in many respects which cannot all be discussed here. We leave outside our brief discussion the rich onomastic harvest as well as the many professions (some 30) of both Jews and non-Jews; for these matters we refer to the elaborate commentaries in Reynolds & Tannenbaum (1987) and Ameling (2004). The most important issue is that this list of some 125 names is subdivided into three categories: 68 Jews, 54 Godfearers, and 3 proselytes. (The Godfearers and proselytes are explicitly described

as such, the Jews are not, but the overwhelming preponderance of biblical or Hebrew Jewish names leaves no room for another conclusion.) The strikingly high percentage of Godfearers, in a list of benefactors and contributors to a Jewish institution, is the great surprise of this inscription. It demonstrates the high degree of integration and influence of this Jewish community in this Carian city. Here one should keep in mind that the 54 Godfearers mentioned undoubtedly formed only a part (only the most well-to-do) of the total group of these pagan sympathizers with Judaism. No less than nine of them were city councillors, a prestigious position that presupposed that one could afford great expenses for the municipality. And apparently these rich non-Jews were ready to pay for Jewish institutions as well. Unfortunately, we do not know whether the high percentage of Godfearers in Aphrodisias reflects an average situation or rather an exceptional one.

Face A and B are from different hands (and might belong to a different period). It is a matter of much scholarly debate whether, in spite of that, side B is simply the continuation of side A, or that there are two inscriptions that do not belong together. Even if the latter were the case, however, then too we have here lists of both Jewish and non-Jewish donors.

Face A. Line 1: *πατελλάδω[ν]* is an uncertain reading and its meaning is uncertain as well. One could also read *πάτελλα δό[η]*, “May God the helper provide meals.” Or *πατελλάδο[ς]*, “May God help the one who provides meals.” Line 3: The term *δεκανία* can mean any formal group or association, here most probably the Jewish burial society (not necessarily of 10 members). Lines 4–5: *τῶν φιλομαθῶ(ν) τῶν κέ παντευλογ(ούντων)* is perhaps a designation of a group of persons who studied Torah and also sang eulogies (= dirges) at funerals. Line 6: *ἀπενθησία* occurs nowhere else; perhaps it means ‘alleviation of grief.’ Line 7: *πλήθος* can designate ‘(members of an) association, community.’ Line 8: *μνήμα* is ‘memorial’ but it is also used for ‘grave’ or ‘burial place.’ Lines 8–17: In the margin of the main text one finds, vertically written: *Σαμουήλ πρεσβευτῆς Περγεούς*, ‘Samuel, envoy, from Perge.’ This entry is a corrected version of the one erased from ll. 26–27. Lines 13, 17, 22: A *προσήλυτος* differs from a Godfearer in that he/she has converted to Judaism and become a full member of the Jewish community. The three proselytes mentioned here are members of the *dekania*. Line 18: *Sabbatios* is the first of a series of Jewish festal names in this inscription; see also *Eusabbathios*, and *Heortasios* (or *Hortasios*). Line 25: *νεκάρης* may also be taken as a name: *Nectari(o)s*. Lines 26–27: These words were erased and added again in a revised form in the margin of lines 8–17 (see above), where ‘priest’ is replaced by ‘from Perge.’

Face B. Lines 11 and 17: The opposition between *Ὁξυχόλιος γέρων* and *Ὁξυχόλιος νεώτερος* strongly suggests that *γέρων* here means ‘elderly person’ and is not

a title for an elder (which would rather be πρεσβύτερος). Line 29: The meaning of χιλᾶς is uncertain; 'stitcher,' 'plaiter,' or 'braider' are possible translations as well. Line 43: IOYNBAΛΟΣ is hard to explain, although Balos is an indigenous Anatolian name. Or is it perhaps a garbled form of *Juvenalios* (Juvenal)?

19 *IJO II 16: Aphrodisias, Caria, 5th–6th Century*

τόπος Βενέτων
 2. Ἑβραίων παλαιῶν

Place of the Jewish Blues, the elderly
 Or: Place of the Blues (and) elderly Jews

This inscription is a seat marker on a bench found in the Odeion (a small theatre) of Aphrodisias, indicating the block of seats reserved for the group called Βένετοι Ἑβραῖοι παλαιοί. Line 1: The Blues (Βένετοι) and the Greens (Πράσινοι) were the most important circus factions in the Roman and early Byzantine period. The character of these factions changed over the centuries, but their connection with the world of the athletic contests, the arenas, especially the hippodromes, remained constant. Having begun as privately run organizations of performers and supporters, in the course of the history of the Empire(s), the authorities gained more and more of a grip on them. To an increasing degree these sporting associations became political parties and (often hooligan-like) pressure groups, even militias, especially in late antiquity and the early Byzantine period. From the beginning, the Blues and the Greens were in conflict with each other. There is both epigraphic and literary evidence that gives a strong impression of affinity between Jews and Blues, although it is hard to understand what the basis of this affinity was. Our inscription at least implies Jewish support for the Blues. Line 2: The designation ‘Hebrews’ for Jews occurs more often in late (5th/6th cent.) than in early inscriptions. The exact sense of παλαιοί is a matter of debate. It is more often used to indicate things of old date rather than old age. Moreover, it would seem to be a bit strange that ‘elderly Jews’ belonged to the supporters of a rather violent circus faction. Some scholars have proposed to read τελείων (‘adult’) instead of παλαιῶν. That makes more sense but is palaeographically problematic.

20 IJO II 134, Sardis, Lydia, 4th–6th Century

- Αὐρ.
 2. Ἑρμογέ-
 νης Σαρδ.
 4. θεοσε-
 βῆς ἐκ
 6. τῶν τῆς
 προνοίας
 8. εὐξάμε-
 νος τὸ ἐ-
 10. πταμύ-
 ξιον ἐ-
 12. ποίησα

I, Aurelius Hermogenes, citizen of Sardis, Godfearer, having made a vow, executed the seven-branched candlestick from the gifts of Providence.

This is one of the many Greek inscriptions found in the ancient synagogue of Sardis, the largest synagogue building ever excavated (it measures some 20 × 100 meters and could accommodate some 1,000 people). Lines 4–5: It is striking that it is the Godfearer Aurelius Hermogenes, who was not a full member of the Jewish community, who donated one of the most significant cultic objects of the Jewish religion, the menorah. Lines 5–7: With due piety it is often stated in the synagogue inscriptions of Sardis that a gift was donated ‘from the gifts of Providence.’ It is striking that the God of Israel is designated no less than 11 times by the non-biblical term *Pronoia*, something that we know primarily from the writings of several Church Fathers. Graeco-Jewish authors such as Philo and Josephus, too, use the term *pronoia* dozens of times, but always as an attribute or quality, never as the equivalent of God. In antiquity, *pronoia* was initially used primarily for the impersonal *providentia* in Stoic philosophy. Later on this concept was also employed in a wider sense in the philosophical debates of the Hellenistic and Roman period (think of the various treatises *Peri pronoias* from that period). It is probable that this striking use of *pronoia* as a designation of God in the Sardis inscriptions was influenced by the religio-philosophical debates about providence in later antiquity. Lines 9–11: ἐπταμύξιον is a *hapax*, although ἐπτάμυξος and ἐπτάμυχος were already attested in a few inscriptions and papyri. Line 12: ἐποίησα does not necessarily imply that Hermogenes constructed the menorah himself; he could also have it made.

21 *IJO II 191: Hierapolis, Phrygia, 3rd–5th Century*

Side A

- ἡ σορός καὶ τὸ ὑπὸ αὐτὴν θέμα καὶ ὁ περὶ αὐτὴν τόπος
 2. Νεικοτείμου Λυκίδα τοῦ Ἀρτεμίσιου, ἐν ᾗ κεκήδευ-
 ται Ἀπφιάς, ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ· ταύτης ἀντίγραφον ἀπετέθη
 4. εἰς τὸ ἀρχεῖον. Ἰουδαϊκή.

Side B

- ἡ σορός καὶ ὁ περὶ αὐτὴν τόπος Αὐρ. Ἑορτασίου
 2. Ἰουλιανοῦ Τριπολείτου Ἰουδέου, νοῖν οἴκο(ῦ)ν[τος]
 ἐν Εἰεραπόλει, ἐν ᾗ κηδευθήσεται αὐτὸς καὶ ἡ
 4. γυνὴ αὐτοῦ Γλυκωνίς· κηδεύωνται δὲ καὶ τὰ
 τέκνα αὐτῶν, ἐτέρῳ δὲ οὐδενὶ ἐξέσται κηδευ-
 6. θῆναι, ἐπεὶ ὁ παρὰ ταῦτα ποιήσας δώσει τῇ ἀγιωτά-
 τη συναγωγῇ ἀργύρου λίτρας δύο.

Side A:

The sarcophagus and the soil(?) beneath it and the space around it belong to Nikotimus Lykidas, son of Artemisius; in it lies buried his wife Apphias. A copy of this was deposited in the archive. (She was?) Jewish.

Side B:

The sarcophagus and the space around it belong to Aurelius Heortasius Julianus, a Jew from Tripolis who now lives in Hierapolis. In it he himself and his wife Glykonis will be buried and also their children should be buried there. However, no one else is allowed to be buried here, for he who acts contrary to this will have to pay two pounds of silver to the most holy synagogue.

This sarcophagus was inscribed on two sides, but the second inscription is from a later date (perhaps a century later) than the first one, which proves that the expensive sarcophagus was reused later, again by Jews.

Side A. Line 1: The exact meaning of θέμα is uncertain; possibly it was the elevation upon which the sarcophagus was placed. Line 3: ταύτης refers to the inscription itself (τῆς ἐπιγραφῆς). Line 4: The isolated Ἰουδαϊκή = Ἰουδαϊκή could

grammatically refer to the sarcophagus but also to Apphias. Since in the latter case, however, one would rather expect Ἰουδαῖα, it is slightly more probable that it refers to ἡ σορός.

Side B. Line 1: Heortasios is the Greek 'translation' of the Hebrew name Chaggai (*chag* is 'feast'). Line 2: Which of the several cities called Tripolis is meant here is uncertain, but most probably it refers to a small city not far from Hierapolis. Νοῖν = νῦν. Line 6–7: The 'synagogue' is here the Jewish community, although the use of 'most holy' suggests that the author had the building in mind as well. In late antiquity, terms that had originally been applied to the temple in Jerusalem were increasingly applied to the synagogue.

22 *IJO II 146: Thyateira, Asia Minor, Early 2nd Century CE*

- Φάβιος Ζώσιμος κατασκευάσας σορὸν ἔθετο ἐπὶ τόπου καθαροῦ ὄντος πρὸ
2. τῆς πόλεως πρὸς τῷ σαμβαθείῳ ἐν τῷ Χαλδαίου περι-
βόλῳ παρὰ τὴν δημοσίαν ὁδὸν ἑαυτῷ, ἐφ' ᾧ τεθῇ, καὶ τῇ γλυκυτάτῃ
 4. αὐτοῦ γυναικὶ Αὐρηλίᾳ Ποντιανῇ, μηδενὸς ἔχοντος ἐτέρου
ἐξουσίαν θεῖναι τινα εἰς τὴν σορὸν ταύτην. ὅς δ' ἂν τολμήσῃ ἢ ποιήσῃ
 6. παρὰ ταῦτα, δώσει εἰς μὲν τὴν πόλιν τὴν Θυατειρηνῶν ἀρ-
γυρίου δηνάρια χεῖλια πεντακόσια, εἰς δὲ τὸ ἱερώτατον ταμεῖον δηνάρια
 8. δισχεῖλια πεντακόσια, γεινόμενος ὑπεύθυνος ἔξωθεν τῷ
τῆς τυμβωρυχίας νόμῳ. Ταύτης τῆς ἐπιγραφῆς ἐγράφη ἀπλᾶ δύο
 10. ὧν τὸ ἕτερον ἐτέθη εἰς τὸ ἀρχεῖον. ἐγένετο ἐν τῇ λαμπροτάτῃ
Θυατειρηνῶν πόλει ἀνθυπάτῳ Κατιλλίῳ Σεβήρῳ μηνὸς Αὐδναίου τρις-
 12. καιδεκάτῃ ὑπὸ Μηνόφιλον Ἰουλιανοῦ δημόσιον.

Fabius Zosimus, who had this sarcophagus made, put it on a holy place located before the city, near the Sabbateion in the Chaldaean quarter, alongside the public road, for himself, in order to be deposited there, and for his very sweet wife Aurelia Pontiane, but no one else has the right to deposit someone into this sarcophagus. But if someone dares to do so or acts contrary to these (rules), he will have to pay 1500 silver denaria to the city of the Thyatirans and to the most holy treasury 2500 silver denaria, and, moreover, he falls under the law of tomb violation. Two copies of this inscription have been written, one of which has been deposited in the archive. This has been done in the most illustrious city of the Thyatirans when Catillius Severus was consul, on the 13th of the month Audnaios, by Menophilus the public notary, the son of Julianus.

This carefully executed inscription probably belongs to a well-to-do and well-educated Jew in Thyatira (note how few spelling errors there are, just three minor cases of itacism). It is one of the many instances, especially from Asia Minor, in which the heavy fines for violation of the tomb are spelled out in detail. Lines 1–3: The detailed indication of the tomb's location was not meant for the reader but for the copy of the epitaph in the municipal archive, thus enabling the authorities to find the tomb. Whether the owner was indeed a Jew depends upon whether or not the term *σαμβαθείον* is identical to *σαββατεῖον* in the meaning of 'synagogue' (see, e.g., Josephus, *Ant.* 16.164). However, the meaning of 'sanctuary of the Chaldaean (= Babylonian) Sibyl Sambethe' cannot wholly be excluded; some scholars argue that the expression '*sambatheion* in the Chaldaean quarter' strongly suggests that the sanctuary of the Chaldaean

Sibyl Sambethe is meant here. The Chaldaean Sibyl, however, may have been identical to the Hebrew Sibyl (the latest editor, in *IJO* II, therefore calls it 'vielleicht ein jüdisches Gebäude'). Be that as it may, if it was Jewish, the community to which this 'Sabbath House' belonged can hardly have been a halakhically very strict one for a cemetery was situated in its vicinity, unless of course the (not exclusively Jewish) cemetery was of a later date than the synagogue. Much is due to remain uncertain here, also because the vicinity of the synagogue does not necessarily tell us what was Fabius Zosimus' religion. Most scholars, however, assume he was a Jew. Line 7: τὸ ἱερώτατον ταμεῖον is here the treasury of the Jewish community. Line 8: ἔξωθεν is here an adverb with the meaning of 'moreover.'

23 IJO II 236: Corycus, Cilicia, 3rd–4th Century

- Σωματοθήκη Αὐρ. Εὐσανβατίου Μενάνδρου Κωρυκιώτου
2. βουλευτοῦ καὶ τῆς γυνέκος αὐτοῦ Ματρώνης τῆς καὶ Φωτίου τῆς ἄσυν-
κρίτου καὶ ἀημνήστου—ἐνθα κίτε ἡ αὐτὴ Φωτίων, υἱόνος Ματρώνης [...]ου
δουκηναρίου
 4. Σελευκέων—καὶ τῶν γλυκυτά[τω]ν τέκνων αὐτῶν· εἴ τις δὲ ἕτερος βουληθῇ
θῆνε ἐνθάδ[ε],
δῶσει τοῖς διαδόχοις τοῦ αὐτοῦ Εὐσανβατίου χ[ρυ]σοῦ ο[ὕνκίας] τ[ρι]ς [... μὴ
ἄθυ]μῆτε, οὐδὶς
 6. γὰρ ἀθάνατος εἰ μὴ μόνος εἷς, ὁ τοῦτο προστάξας γενέσθε, [ὅς ἰς σφαῖρ]αν
πλα[νητῶν κατέ]στησεν ἡμᾶς.

Sarcophagus of Aurelius Eusanbatio, son of Menander, citizen of Corycus, city-councillor, and of his wife, the peerless and unforgettable Matrona, also called Photion. Here lies Photion herself, the granddaughter(?) of Matrona (...) of the *ducenarius* from Seleucia and of their sweetest children. If anyone wishes to place (another body) here, he shall pay to the heirs of the same Eusanbatio three ounces (?) of gold. Do not lose heart, for no-one is immortal save the One who has ordered that this take place, He who has transposed us to the sphere of the planets.

Lines 1–2: In view of the fact that Eusanbatio has purchased a sarcophagus and is city-councillor, he must be a rich man. Line 2: Matrona's hypocoristicon is Φωτίον or Φώτιον, a neuter (spelled as Φωτίων in line 3). Lines 2–3: ἄσυνκριτος and ἀείμνηστος, 'incomparable and always to be remembered,' are epithets frequently occurring in pagan epitaphs. Line 3: υἱόνος = υἱώνος, 'grandson,' but here probably 'granddaughter,' unless one constructs the sentence so as to mean, "Here she lies (and) Photion, the grandson of Matrona and (...?), the *ducenarius*," but that is a forced solution. Probably Photion, Eusanbatio's wife, who has already died and is buried in the sarcophagus, has the same name as her grandmother, who was married to a *ducenarius*, a medium-ranking Roman official, both of them from one of the cities called Seleucia. Lines 4–5: Usually the fine has to be paid to the treasury of the municipality or of the synagogue, but here to Eusanbatio's heirs, a variant that occurs frequently in pagan Anatolian epitaphs. Lines 5–6: The usual formula (in both pagan, Jewish, and Christian epitaphs) is θαρσεῖτε, οὐδεὶς ἀθάνατος, 'Keep courage, nobody is immortal.' Here we have an unusual variant. It is addressed to the readers of the epitaph, not to the deceased. Line 6: τοῦτο most probably refers to the fact that humans have to die because God has decreed so (rather than to the fine

for disturbing the grave). If the restoration of the text is correct, we have here a rather unique testimony to Jewish belief in astral immortality. The author of this epitaph believed that, probably right after death, the deceased is granted by God to dwell among the planets or stars and to experience eternal bliss by being a heavenly body. It should be borne in mind that heavenly bodies were regarded as living beings by Jews, most often as angels. The deceased thus becomes a heavenly being that lives the angelic life of a heavenly body.

24 *IJO I BS7: Panticapaeum (on the Crimea), 1st–2nd Century*

1. [.....]κα–
2. κου ἀφίημι ἐπὶ τῆς προσευ–
3. χῆς Ἐλπί(δ)α [ἐμ]α[υ]τῆς θρεπτ[ῆν]
4. ὅπως ἐστὶν ἀπαρενόχλητος
5. καὶ ἀνεπίληπτος ἀπὸ παντὸς
6. κληρονόμου χωρὶς τοῦ προσ–
7. καρτερεῖν τῇ προσευχῇ· ἐπι–
8. τροπευούσης τῆς συναγωγ–
9. γῆς τῶν Ἰουδαίων καὶ θεδόν
10. σεβῶν.

I [.....] (son/daughter of) ... cacus, release in the prayer-house Elpis, my home-bred slave-woman, so that she is unassailable and unmolested by every heir, except for doing service to the prayer-house, while the community of the Jews and Godfearers provide joint guardianship.

Line 1: In the lines before ...]κακου, now lost, the text would have consisted of a dating formula and the name of the manumitter,—κακου most probably being the conclusion in the genitive of the patronymic. Line 2: In the Hellenistic period, προσευχή (litt. ‘prayer,’ for ‘house of prayer’) was the common designation of the synagogue building, thus indicating that worship was its primary purpose. For the community, συναγωγή was used, as in line 8–9. Only in the imperial period was συναγωγή also used for the building. Line 3: The reading of this line is not quite certain; Elpis could be both a man’s and a woman’s name and because of a lacuna in the text (θρεπτ[ῆν] or θρεπτ[όν]?) we cannot know whether Elpis was a male or a female slave brought up in the house of the owner. Lines 4–5 stipulates that the freedom of the ex-slave should not be curtailed in any way by anybody. Lines 6–7: The exact meaning of χωρὶς τοῦ προσκαρτερεῖν τῇ προσευχῇ is a matter of debate, but it certainly implies some form of commitment to the prayer house, although it remains unclear whether it involved labour services, attendance, or full conversion. Lines 8–10: The guardianship of the new status of the released ex-slave is provided by the Jewish community. The words θεδόν σεβῶν probably are a mistake for θεοσεβῶν, ‘of the Godfearers.’ If that interpretation is correct, it emphasizes the fact, also known from other sources, that these pagan sympathizers with Judaism formed a more or less integral part of the Jewish community, even though they had not (yet) fully converted to the Jewish faith so as to become proselytes. Here, Godfearers are involved in the costly procedure of the manumission of a Jewish slave.

25 *IJO I Maci: Stobi, Macedonia, 2nd–3rd Century*

[.....]

2. [Κλ.] Τιβέριος Πολύ-
χαρμος ὁ καὶ Ἀχύρι-
4. ος ὁ πατήρ τῆς ἐν
Στόβοις συναγωγῆς,
6. ὃς πολειτευσάμε-
νος πάσαν πολιτεί-
8. αν κατὰ τὸν Ἰουδαϊ-
σμὸν εὐχῆς ἔνεκεν
10. τοὺς μὲν οἴκους τῷ
ἀγίῳ τόπῳ καὶ τὸ
12. τρίκλεινον σὺν τῷ
τετραστόῳ ἐκ τῶν
14. οἰκείων χρημάτων
μηδὲν ὅλως παραψά-
16. μενος τῶν ἀγίων· τὴν
δὲ ἐξουσίαν τῶν ὑπε-
18. ρῶν πάντων πᾶσαν
καὶ τὴν δεσποτείαν
20. ἔχειν ἐμὲ τὸν Κλ. Τιβέρι-
ον Πολύχαρμον [[καὶ τοὺς]]
22. καὶ τοὺς κληρονόμους
τοὺς ἐμοὺς διὰ παντὸς
24. βίου· ὃς ἂν δὲ βουληθῇ
τι καινοτομήσαι παρὰ τὰ ὑ-
26. π' ἐμοῦ δοχθέντα δώσει τῷ
πατριαρχῇ δηναρίων (μ)υριά-
28. δας εἴκοσι πέντε· οὕτω γάρ
μοι συνέδοξεν· τὴν δὲ ἐπι-
30. σκευὴν τῆς κεράμου τῶν
ὑπερώων ποιεῖσθαι ἐμὲ
32. καὶ κληρονόμους
ἐμοὺς.

[..... I.] Claudius Tiberius Polycharmus, also called Achyrius, the father of the synagogue at Stobi, having lived my whole life according to (the rules of) Judaism, in fulfillment of a vow (have donated) the rooms to the holy place, and also the triclinium with the tetrastoa, out of my personal

funds without touching the sacred (funds) at all. All the right of all the upper rooms and the ownership is to be held by me, Claudius Tiberius Polycharmus, and my heirs for all our life. If someone wishes to make changes beyond my decisions, he shall give the Patriarch 250,000 denarii. For thus I have agreed. As for the upkeep of the roof tiles of the upper rooms, it will be done by me and my heirs.

Lines 2–3: The *nomen* Claudius indicates that Polycharmus was in possession of Roman citizenship. His by-name Achyrius is probably derived from ἄχυρον, chaff or flax, perhaps a reference to the colour of Polycharmus' hair (other explanations are possible as well). Lines 4–5: The designation 'father of the synagogue' does not refer to an office holder but was often given as an honorary title to donors or benefactors of the Jewish community. Polycharmus donated parts of a building (probably the ground floor of his own sizeable residence) to the synagogue. This building has been excavated, but the *triclinium* (dining room) and *tetrastoon* (hall with four rows of columns) have not been identified by the archaeologists. Lines 7–9: That Polycharmus 'lived all of his life in accordance with Judaism' undoubtedly means that he was strict in the observance of the prescriptions of the Torah (at least according to himself). What kind of 'vow' (*euchê*) Polycharmus had taken is not stated, but the formula 'in fulfillment of a vow' represents his donation as an act of piety. Line 11: 'Holy place' is a frequently occurring designation of a synagogue in late antiquity. Line 15–16 indicates that no money was taken from the treasury of the Jewish community because Polycharmus covered all expenses from his own pocket. Lines 17–24: Polycharmus and his heirs remain in possession of the upper floor of the building, while the community could gather downstairs at ground floor level. Lines 26–28: The reference is most probably to the Jewish Patriarch in Palestine, to which the very high fine of a quarter of a million denarii is to be paid in case of a breach of Polycharmus' will.

26 *1JO I Ach70: Rheneia (Island near Delos), 2nd–1st Century BCE*

- Ἐπικαλοῦμαι καὶ ἀξιῶ τὸν θεὸν τὸν
 2. ὕψιστον, τὸν κύριον τῶν πνευμάτων
 καὶ πάσης σαρκός, ἐπὶ τοὺς δόλῳ φονεύ–
 4. σαντας ἢ φαρμακεύσαντας τὴν τα–
 λαίπωρον ἄωρον Ἡράκλεαν ἐχχέαν–
 6. τας αὐτῆς τὸ ἀναίτιον αἷμα ἀδί–
 κως, ἵνα οὕτως γένηται τοῖς φονεύ–
 8. σασιν αὐτὴν ἢ φαρμακεύσασιν καὶ
 τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτῶν, Κύριε ὁ πάντα ἐ–
 10. φορῶν καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ, ᾧ πᾶσα ψυ–
 χὴ ἐν τῇ σήμερον ἡμέρᾳ ταπεινοῦται
 12. μεθ' ἱκετείας, ἵνα ἐγδικήσῃς τὸ αἷμα τὸ
 ἀναίτιον ζητήσεις καὶ τὴν ταχίστην.

I call upon and entreat God

2. the Most High, the Lord of the spirits
 and of all flesh, against those who have treacherously
 4. murdered or poisoned the wretched
 Heraclea, who died untimely, and who have
 6. unjustly shed her innocent blood,
 that the same may happen to them who have
 8. murdered or poisoned her and
 to their children, O Lord, you who see
 10. all things, and you, angels of God, for whom every
 soul humbles itself on the present day
 12. with supplication, that you may avenge and requite
 her innocent blood, and that as soon as possible.

This is an extraordinary epitaph, found on the small island of Rheneia in the Aegean Sea, that served as burial site for the nearby sacred island of Delos. It is a prayer for revenge, inscribed on the tombstone below two hands raised up towards heaven. We have this prayer in two copies, one for the girl Heraclea and the other for Marthine (1JO I Ach 70 and 71). The spelling is remarkably correct (but see ἐγδικήσῃς for ἐκδικήσῃς in 12). There are many echoes of LXX vocabulary and phraseology. Ἐπικαλεῖσθαι, ἀξιοῦν, θεὸς ὕψιστος, ἐκχεῖν αἷμα ἀναίτιον, πᾶσα ψυχή, ταπεινοῦσθαι, αἷμα ἐκδικεῖν, etc., are all of them common terms and expressions in the LXX. Line 2–3: 'God the Most High' (θεὸς ὕψιστος) is a current designation of the God of Israel (Gen. 14:18; Num. 24:16; Mic. 6:6; Ps. 81:6),

but it is also used in non-Jewish contexts for “highest” gods, esp. Zeus. The widespread cult of *Theos Hypsistos* in later antiquity was probably a syncretistic movement that tried to bridge the gap between polytheism and monotheism (esp. Judaism). For κύριος τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ πάσης σαρκός see Num. 16:22 and 27:16; πνεύματα are here angels, as in Hebr. 1:14 (and cf. *IClem.* 64). It is striking that in line 10 angels are invoked alongside God, a clear sign of Jewish angel veneration. Line 5: The Greek adjective ἄωρος is often used in epitaphs for children who died young. It is for that reason that one has often assumed that Heraclea and Martine were children, unnecessarily so, however, since it could also be used for adults who died before getting married. Line 7: The wording expresses the notion of exacting justice in conformity (οὕτως) with the crime (may they *too* be murdered or poisoned). Line 8–9: For καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτῶν see Ex. 20:5 and Num. 14:18. Line 9–10: Κύριε ὁ πάντα ἐφορῶν is reminiscent of LXX Job 34:23, Esth. 5:1, 2 Macc. 7:35, 3 Macc. 2:21 (and again *IClem.* 64). It should, however, be kept in mind that ever since Homer (*Il.* 3.277; *Od.* 11.109 et al.) ὃς πάντ’ ἐφορᾷ (καὶ πάντ’ ἐπακούει) was also a standard epithet of the sun, or rather the Sun-god, in his function of guardian of justice; and it is notable that inscriptions invoking Helios or Sol in this function are often accompanied, as in our case, by two hands raised to heaven. One wonders whether solar aspects of Yahwism still play a role here (see Ps. 84:12; Mal. 4:2[3:20 LXX]). Line 10–11: Most interesting is the mention of ‘the day on which every soul humiliates itself with supplications.’ It reminds one strongly of Lev. 23:29, πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἥτις μὴ ταπεινωθῇσεται ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτῃ, which is about fasting on the Day of Atonement. So what we possibly have here is a prayer for vengeance on Yom Kippur, which was evidently celebrated by the Jewish community on pre-Christian Delos. The phenomenon of sending prayers for vengeance to God on Yom Kippur (albeit here by an individual; see the singular verbs in the first line) is otherwise unattested.

27 IJO I Cre3: Kastelli Kissamou, Crete, 4th–5th Century

- Σοφία Γορτινί–
 2. α πρεσβυτέρα
 κέ ἀρχισυναγω–
 4. γίσσα Κισσάμου ἔν–
 θα· μνήμη δικέας
 6. ἰς ἐῶνα· ἀμήν.

Sophia of Gortyn, *presbytera* and *archisynagōgissa* of Kissamos, (lies) here. The memory of the righteous woman be forever. Amen

Sophia originated in Gortyn, in the central southern part of Crete, and moved to Kissamos, at the western edge of the island, where she held office in the Jewish community and was buried. Line 2: πρεσβυτέρα can mean ‘elderly woman’ but the collocation πρεσβυτέρα καὶ ἀρχισυναγωγίσσα leaves no doubt about its being a title of a functionary here. It has long been thought (and still is) that a *presbytera* is no more than the wife of a *presbyteros*, a member of the council of elders (*gerousia*) of the synagogue, but that is at variance with the fact that in the cases where women are called *presbyterai* their names are never accompanied by that of a male *presbyteros*. This supports the interpretation that this was a title which a woman could hold in her own right. The fact that Sophia is also called *archisynagōgissa* makes this all the more probable. The exact nature of the latter office remains unclear but it certainly implied a position of prestige in the community, even though the actual function may have been primarily a ceremonial one. Lines 5–6: This is certainly a variant of the LXX version of Prov. 10:7 (Hebrew: ‘The memory of the righteous one be for a blessing’): μνήμη δικαίων μετ’ ἐγκωμίων. The expression εἰς αἰῶνα is frequent in the Greek Bible. Here the expression may be used as a liturgical formula.

28 IJO 1 Ach72: Syros, an Island in the Aegean Sea, 4th–5th Century

- Κ(ύρι)ε βοήθη τῷ δοῦ—
 2. λῳ σου Εὐνομίῳ
 κὲ πάσῃ τῇ συνπλοίῳ—
 4. α αὐτοῦ Νάξις.

Lord, help your servant Eunomius and all his ship's crew, Naxians.

This text is a graffito on a rock some 70 meters from the beach on NW Syros. Correctly spelled the text would be as follows: Κύριε, βοήθει τῷ δούλῳ σου Εὐνομίῳ καὶ πάσῃ τῇ συμπλοίᾳ αὐτοῦ Νάξις. Jewish symbols (menorah, lulav) flanking the inscription prove that it is not Christian. Line 1: The text reads KE with a horizontal bar above the letters that marks it as an abbreviation for the *nomen sacrum* Κύριε. The formula 'Lord, help ...' is very common in Christian inscriptions but it occurs also frequently in Jewish epigraphy. Here, it asks for God's protection on a sea voyage. Line 2: Eunomius is a variant of Eunomos, a name expressing faithfulness to the Torah. Lines 3–4: τῇ συνπλοίᾳ αὐτοῦ Νάξις is a *constructio ad sententiam*: 'Naxians' is grammatically a plural since (the singular) 'crew' is implicitly a plural. In another inscription (non-Jewish?) from the same rock-bay at Syros we read: "We thank you, Lord, that you saved your servant Aster the Naxian and all his ship's crew."

29 *ΙΙΟ III Cyp3: Golgoi, Cyprus, 4th–5th Century*

- Ἰωσή πρεσβ(ύτερος)
 2. υἱὸς) Συνεσίου
 ἀνενέωσαν
 4. τὸ πᾶν ἔργον
 τῆς Ἑβραϊκῆς.

Jose the elder, son of Synesius, renewed the whole building of the Jewish [Hebrew] community.

This building inscription is engraved on the lower part of a column. Line 1: Jose and Joses are variants of the name Joseph. Jose was one of the members of the board of elders of the community. Line 2: υἱὸς)—the stone has υἱοῦ. Line 3: The plural form ἀνενέωσαν may be a mistake for ἀνενέωσεν, ‘he repaired,’ but it might also be that another benefactor was mentioned on a previous column. ‘He/they repaired the whole building’ = ‘he/they had the whole building repaired.’ Line 5: The noun Ἑβραϊκή is unique in Jewish epigraphy and literature. Since it is clear that the building that has been renewed is indicated by ἔργον, it seems most probable that the *Hebraikê* (sc., *synagôgê*) is the Jewish community and not the synagogue building. The word Hebrew refers to the biblical past of the Jewish people.

30 IJO I Ach: Larissa, Thessaly, 1st–4th Century CE

- Μαρία Ἰούδα
 2. Λεοντίσκου
 δὲ γυνή. τῷ
 4. λαῶ χαί-
 ρειν.
 6. [χαί]ροις ἀνθρώπων πεπ[νυ-]
 [μέν]ε ὅστις ὑπάρχει[ς].

Maria, (daughter) of Juda (and) wife of Leontiskos. Farewell to the people.
 May you rejoice, you wise among men, whoever you are.

This is the third of three epitaphs on a tombstone in Larissa, indicating that it was probably an accepted practice among Jews of that city to reuse funerary monuments. It is the only (partly) poetic Jewish epitaph in Greek outside of Egypt and Palestine where most of them were found (12 in Leontopolis, 2 in Beth She'arim; further one in Apollonia, Asia Minor, and a Latin one in Rome). It is a typically Larissan epitaph in that it is one of a unique series of twelve from that city which all contain the greeting formula τῷ λαῶ χαίρειν. Line 1–2: Some translate “Maria Juda, wife of Leontiskos”, but the genitive which follows the name of a woman usually indicates the name of her father, the husband being indicated by the formula γυνή δὲ τοῦ δέινος. Lines 3–5: The formula τῷ λαῶ χαίρειν may be compared to the wish *shalom 'al Yisra'el* that is often found elsewhere, also at the end of Greek inscriptions. The word *laos* here has the meaning of ‘local Jewish community’ (in the LXX *laos* often specifically designates the people of Israel). Lines 6–7: The metrical closing line wishes the passer-by good luck with a phrase which has a distinctly Homeric flavour, created by πεπνυμένε, a well-known tag often used in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

31 *IJO I Ach42: Delphi, Mid-Second Century BCE*

- [ἄρ]χοντο[ς Ἐμμενίδα τοῦ] Καλλία [μ]ηνὸς Ἀπελλαί[ου] ἐπὶ το[ῖ]σδε ἀπ[έ]–
 2. δοτο Κλέων Κλευδάμου συνεπαινεύσας Ξενοφανείας τὰς [μα]τρὸς
 Κλευδάμου, τῷ Ἀπόλλωνι τῷ Πυθίῳ σῶμα ἀνδρείον ᾧ ὄνομα
 4. Ἰουδαῖος, τὸ γένος Ἰουδαῖον, τιμὰς ἀργυρίου μνᾶν τεσσάρων, ἐ–
 φ' ᾧτε ἐλεύθερον εἶμεν καὶ ἀνέφαπτον ἀπὸ πάντων τὸμ πάντα
 6. βίον, καθὼς ἐπίστευσε Ἰουδαῖος τῷ θεῷ τὰν ὦνάν, ποιέων ὃ κα θε–
 λη. βεβαιωτῆρες κατὰ τὸν νόμον τὰς πόλιος Ξένων Γλαύκου, Ἀριστίων
 8. Ἄγωνος. μάρτυρες τοῖ ἱερεῖς τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος Ἀμύντας, Ταράντινος
 καὶ τοῖ ἄρχοντες Ἀριστίων, Ἄσανδρος, Ἀριστόμαχος, ἰδιῶται
 10. Σωδαμίδας, Θεόφραστος, Τείσων, Γλαύκος Ξένωνος, Μένης.

In the archonship of Emmenides, son of Callias, in the month of Apellaios, in which Cleon, son of Cleodamus, with the consent of Xenophania, mother of Cleodamus, has sold to Pythian Apollo a male body, Ioudaios by name, a Jew (Ioudaios) by descent, for the sum of four silver minae, on condition that he is to be free and shall not be claimed (as a slave) by anyone throughout his whole life. Since Ioudaios has entrusted the sale to the god, he may do whatever he wishes. Guarantors according to the law of the city: Xenon, son of Glaucus (and) Aristion, son of Agon. Witnesses: Amynatas and Tarantinus, the priests of Apollo, and the archons Aristion, Asandrus, Aristomachus. Laymen: Sodamidas, Theophrastus, Teison, Glaucus son of Menon, Menes.

This inscription was found in the temple of the Pythian Apollo in Delphi. It shows us that pagan manumission procedures (fictive sale to the god Apollo) were followed also in the case of Jewish slaves to be set free. The standard formulae used at Delphi in the Hellenistic and Roman period are used here, as is the use of the Boeotian dialect. Line 1: This dates the inscription to November/December of 168 BCE. Line 3: the use of 'body' (σῶμα) instead of 'person' indicates that legally slaves were not regarded as persons but as things. Line 4: In its first occurrence Ἰουδαῖος is a name; slaves often received ethnic personal names. The second occurrence identifies the ex-slave also as a member of the Jewish people (γένος). 'Four silver minae' is ca. 400 drachmae; the purchasing power of the drachma was not insignificant—in the 2nd century BCE one could buy a sheep for one drachma. It often was the local Jewish community who paid the price for the manumission of a fellow-Jew.

32 IJO I Ach 51: Argos, Greece, 3rd–4th Century

- Αὐρήλιος Ἰωσῆς ἐνεύ—
 2. χομαι τὰς θείας καὶ μεγάλ[ας]
 δυνάμεις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὰ[ς]
 4. δυνάμεις τοῦ νόμου καὶ τὴν
 τιμὴν τῶν πατριαρχῶν καὶ
 6. τὴν τιμὴν τῶν ἐθναρχῶν καὶ
 τὴν τιμὴν τῶν σοφῶν καὶ τὴν
 8. τιμὴν τῆς λατρίας τῆς γιγνομένης
 ἐφ' ἐκάστης ἡμέρας τῷ θεῷ πρὸς τῷ
 10. μηδὲνα ἀνασκειάσε τὸ ἐμὸν μνήμα
 τὸ μετὰ πολλῶν μόχθων ἐποίησ[α].

I, Aurelius Joses, adjure (by) the divine and great powers of God, and the powers of the Law, and the honour of the patriarchs, and the honour of the ethnarchs, and the honour of the wise, and the honour of the worship which is paid each day to God, (that) nobody is to open my tomb, which I have made with many efforts.

Line 1: The name Aurelius indicates that the Jew Joses had Roman citizenship probably due to the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of 212 CE. Joses is a ellenized form of the Hebrew name Joseph; it was quite common among Jews of the period (see, e.g., Mark 6:3; 15:40; Acts 4:36 *v.l.* etc.). Line 1–2: the verb ἐνεύχομαι usually means ‘to implore’ but here, in view of the twofold τὰς δυνάμεις and the fourfold τὴν τιμὴν, it must mean ‘to adjure by [the powers whose protection is sought for].’ Lines 3–4: δυνάμεις = δυνάμεις. The powers (or: armies) of God are frequently mentioned in the Greek Bible. But what is meant by ‘the powers of the Law’ is hard to say, although the context makes it quite probable that not the Roman but the Jewish law is meant. Lines 5–8 strongly emphasize the ‘honour’ of a number of prestigious persons and a religion in order to add force to the adjuration. The patriarchs are here probably not the biblical patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but the contemporary Jewish Patriarchs in Palestine who, before their office was abrogated in about 425 CE, had considerable political power. The ethnarch (‘ruler of a nation’) may have been a local leader of the Jewish community or, again, a reference to the Patriarch in Palestine (sometimes called ‘ethnarch’ in other sources). It is unclear whether ‘wise men’ refers to certain otherwise unattested functionaries in the Jewish community or to rabbinic Sages, *chakhamim* (although the latter seems improbable). Lines 8–9 seem to refer to the daily prayers offered to God by members of the Jewish

community. Lines 10–11: ἀνασχευάσε = ἀνασχευάσαι, ‘to dismantle, to ravage,’ here in the sense of opening the grave. μνήμα is ‘memorial’ in the sense of ‘grave, tomb.’ The use of τό as a relative pronoun (for ὃ) is vulgar Greek.

33 IJO I Dal2: Senia (Senj), Croatia, 3th–4th Century

- Αὐρη(λ)ιους
 2. Διονυσι—
 ους Ἰουδεο—
 4. υς Τιβε(ρ)ιην—
 σις ἀν(νορου) xxxxx φ—
 6. ι(λ)ιωρουν τριου—
 ν πατερ.

Aurelius Dionysius, a Jew from Tiberias, 50 years old, father of three children.

I have not added accents since this is a Latin epitaph written in the Greek alphabet (why is uncertain, but it is not the only instance). In Latin script it would have run: *Aurelius Dionysius Iudaeus Tiberiensis annorum xxxxx filiorum trium pater*. It is due to influence of vulgar Latin that final *-n* is used thrice for final *-m*: *annorun* (although reconstructed), *filiorun*, *triun*. Line 1: The *nomen* Aurelius indicates that this Dionysius was a descendant of a Jew who obtained Roman citizenship through the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of 212 CE. Line 2: Dionysius (and Dionysia) is a theophoric proper name that was borne by many Jews in the Roman Empire so that it must be regarded as doubtful whether they realized that this name referred to the pagan wine-god Dionysus. Line 3–4: That a Jew from Tiberias was buried in Dalmatia testifies (as do many other inscriptions) to the mobility of Jews in the Roman Empire. Lines 6–7: That Dionysius is explicitly said to have had three children may indicate that he had successfully tried to claim some advantage from this fact on the basis of the *ius liberorum* as stipulated in the marriage legislation of the Emperor Augustus.

34 *JlWE I 152: Syracuse, Sicily, 4th–5th Century*

- κατὰ τοῦ μελ—
 2. λητικοῦ μη—
 δις ἀνοίξῃ ὦδε
 4. ὅτει Νόφειος
 κὲ Νύφη κεῖτε.
 6. εὐλογί—
 α τοῖς ὀσί—
 8. οἰς ὦδε.

By the (judgement) to come, let no-one open (this tomb) here, because Nopheios and Nyphe lie (here). Blessing to the pious here.

Line 1–2: τὸ μελλητικόν is a variant of the formula ἡ μέλλουσα κρίσις, also found in the abbreviated forms ἡ μέλλουσα or τὸ μέλλον (mostly in Christian inscriptions). In tomb inscriptions one finds also other forms of reference to (usually threats with) the divine judgement. Lines 3–5: μηδὶς = μηδεὶς, ὅτει = ὅτι. The names Nopheios and Nyphe are probably somewhat garbled forms of the names Nymphius and Nyphe (more current in Latin than in Greek). Lines 6–8: The blessing formula at the end is more usually found in the form εὐλογία πᾶσιν. The ‘pious’ may refer to the bereaved, but the repeated ὦδε suggests that the writer of the inscription has the deceased in mind here. Maybe he obliquely alludes to Prov. 10:7 (‘the memory of the righteous be for a blessing’).

35 *JIWE II 103: Rome, 3rd–4th Century*

- Hic Regina sita est tali contexta sepulcro*
 2. *quod coniunx statuit respondens eius amori.*
haec post bis denos secum transsegerat annum
 4. *et quartum mensem restantibus octo diebus.*
rursum victura, reditura ad lumina rursum,
 6. *nam sperare potest ideo quod surgat in aevom*
promissum quae vera fides dignisque piisque.
 8. *quae meruit sedem venerandi ruris habere.*
hoc tibi praestiterat pietas, hoc vita pudica,
 10. *hoc et amor generis, hoc observantia legis.*
coniugii meritum cuius tibi gloria curae.
 12. *horum factorum tibi sunt speranda futura,*
de quibus et coniunx maestus solacia quaerit.

Here lies Regina, covered by such a tomb, which her husband set up as fitting to his love. After twice ten years she spent with him one year and four months with eight days remaining. She will live again, return to the light again, for she can hope that she will rise to the life promised, as a real assurance, to the worthy and the pious, in that she has deserved to possess an abode in the hallowed land. This your piety has assured you, this your chaste life, this your love for your people, this your observance of the Law, your devotion to your wedlock, the glory of which was dear to you. For all these deeds your hope of the future is assured. In this your sorrowing husband seeks his comfort.

This is the only Jewish epitaph in the form of a Latin hexametric poem. Line 2: *eius amori* is here more likely ‘his love of her’ than ‘her love.’ Line 3: *transsegerat* stands for *transegerat*. It is slightly more probable that *restantibus octo diebus* means that the eight days are to be subtracted from the fourth month rather than added to it. Then Regina died when she was 21 years and 4 months minus 8 days. Lines 5 to 7 most probably reflect belief in the future resurrection of the body. Line 8: It is a matter of debate whether *venerandum rus* refers to Paradise or to the Holy Land (a general eschatological resurrection in the Land of Israel was a tenet many Jews believed in). Line 10: *amor generis* could mean ‘love of your family’ but it is equally possible to take *genus* here as referring to the Jewish people (as in the epithet *φιλόλαος*). *Observantia legis* underlines the importance of the Torah and its commandments to Regina’s husband.

36 *JlWE II 556: Rome, 3rd–4th Century*

- Ἀμελίῳ τέκνῳ γλυκυ—
 2. τάτῳ ὃς ἔζησεν ἔτη β' μῆ—
 νας β' ἡμέρας
 4. ε'. Ἀμέλις ἀρχ[ω]ν
 κὲ Μαρία γονεῖς τέ—
 6. κνῳ ἀμμώμῳ ὁσεῖῳ
 ἐποίησαν.

For Amelius, their dearest child, who lived two years, two months, and five days. Amelius, *archôn*, and Maria, his parents, had (this tomb) made for their irreproachable (and) pious child.

Line 2: ἔζησεν for ἔζησεν. Line 4: Ἀμέλις for Ἀμέλιος reflects the shortening in the pronunciation of the name. *Archôn*: Ameli(u)s the father had a leading function in his synagogal community. Line 6: ἀμμώμῳ for ἀμώμῳ. Meaning 'blameless' it is a very strong term of endearment that occurs only rarely. 6: ὁσεῖῳ for ὁσίῳ. 'Pious' being the highest Jewish virtue, it is here even said of a child of two years old.

37 *JlWE II 489: Rome, 3rd–4th Century*

- Εἰρήνην τρεζ–
 2. πτή προσήλυ–
 τος πατρός καὶ
 4. μητρὸς Εἰου–
 δῆα Ἰσδραηλίτης
 6. ἔζησεν ἥτ(η) γ' μ(ῆνας) ζ'
 ἡμ(έ)ρ(αν) α'

Irene, foster-child (?), proselyte of father and mother (?), Jewess, Israelite, lived 3 years, 7 months, and 1 day.

Line 1: τρεζπτή is probably a misspelled form of θρεπτή, foster-child, but that is not certain. Line 4–5: Εἰουδῆα stands for Ἰουδαία. Line 6: ἥτ(η) stands for ἔτη. The problem of this epitaph is that Irene died too young to have been a proselyte. So who was the proselyte (her father, her mother, both)? And what is the difference between a Jewess and an Israelite? Because the Greek is so irregular, these questions are very hard to answer. Possibly the stone-mason meant to write that Irene's father was a proselyte and her mother a Jewess so that she could be regarded as an Israelite. Or: if Irene was a foster-child (or adoptive child), the fact that her foster-parents were Jewish entitled her to be regarded as a proselyte.

38 *JlWE II 483: Rome, 3rd–4th Century*

- ἐνθάδε κίτε Θά–
 2. λασα γυνή Παν–
 κρατίου· ἔζησε
 4. ἔτη κζ' καλῶς
 συμβιώσασα.
 6. ἔνθα κίτε
 Θάλασα.

Here lies Thalassa, wife of Pancratius. She lived 27 years, having been a good wife. Here lies Thalassa.

Line 1: κίτε is one of the many spelling variants of κείται. Θάλασα = Θάλασσα, 'the sea,' a rather curious and very uncommon personal name. Line 5: συμβιώσασα for συμβιῶσασα, litt. 'having lived together,' sc., in marriage.

39 *JIWE II 537: Rome (or Porto), 3rd–4th Century*

- Καττία Ἀμμιάς θυγάτηρ Μηνοφί–
 2. λου πατήρ συναγωγῆς τῶν
 Καρκαρησίων, καλῶς βιώσα–
 4. σα ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ, ἔτη ζήσασα
 τριάκοντα καὶ τέσσαρα μετὰ τοῦ
 6. συμβίου. εἶδεν ἐκ τῶν τέκνων
 αὐτῆς ἔγγονα. ὧδε κείται Καττία
 8. Ἀμμιάς.

Cattia Ammias, daughter of Menophilus, father of the synagogue of the Calcaresians, having led a good life in Judaism, having lived thirty-four years with her spouse. From her children she saw grandchildren. Here lies Cattia Ammias.

Line 2: Cattia Ammias' father was 'father' of the synagogue (note that πατήρ is here in the nominative instead of the expected genitive). It is unclear what kind of duties or activities this title implied; it may have been purely honorific (there are also 'mothers of the synagogue'). Line 3: There are five Roman inscriptions mentioning the synagogue of the Calcaresians (or Carcaresians in a variant pronunciation). *Calcar(i)enses* were lime-burners, and it seems reasonable to assume that this name derives from the quarter where the lime-burners lived and worked and where the Jewish synagogue building was situated. Line 3–4: "She lived a good life in Judaism" means that Cattia Ammias lived a good Jewish life, i.e., she lived in accordance with the rules of life in the Torah. Lines 4–7: Even though she had been married for 34 years and had children and grandchildren, the name of her husband is not mentioned (in contrast with that of her father). Line 7: ἔγγονα = ἔκγονα.

40 *JlWE II 463: Rome, 3rd–4th Century*

- ὦδε κίτε Σωφρόνιος υἱὸς Εὐγραφίου
 2. ζήσα[ς ἔτη] ιβ'· ἐν εἰρήνῃ ἢ κοίμησις αὐτοῦ
 [μετὰ τ]ῶν ὁσίων.

Here lies Sophronius, son of Eugraphius, having lived 12 years. In peace be his sleep with the holy ones.

Lines 2–3: The formula “May his sleep be in peace” occurs frequently on Jewish tombstones in Rome. Sometimes the words “with the holy ones” or “with the righteous ones” are added (also in Latin: *in pace dormitio eius cum iustis*, *JlWE I 174*). The formula in its short form need not imply any eschatological notion or refer to a life after death. But the expanded formula most probably refers to a blissful afterlife in the company of the great patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who are the righteous and pious ones *par excellence*.

41 *JIWE II 212: Rome, 3rd–4th Century*

- ἐνθάδε κείτε
 2. Εὐκαρπος νή-
 πιος ὅσιος
 4. φιλόνομος·
 ἐν εἰρήνῃ κοίμη-
 6. σίς σου.

Here lies Eucarpus, a pious child, lover of the Law. May your sleep be in peace.

Line 4: *Philonomos*, ‘lover of the Law’ or ‘loving the Law,’ is one of the most typically Jewish epithets found in epitaphs—it has no pagan or Christian parallels. Like *philentolos* (‘loving the commandments’), it gives expression to the central place the Torah had in Jewish life. Greek-speaking Jews even turned this concept into proper names such as *Philentolios* and *Philonomios*. It is striking that piety and love of the Torah are here said to have been characteristics of a young child.

42 *JIWE II 240: Rome, 3rd–4th Century*

- [.....] Πρέσκος
 2. [.....] ΟΣ
 [.....] ΝΙΣ
 4. φιλόλαος φιλ[έντολ–]
 ος φιλοπένης· [έν εἰρήνῃ]
 6. ἡ κοίμησις τοῦ ἄ[ρχον–]
 τος.

... Priscus [...] who loved the people, who loved the commandments, who loved the poor. In peace be the sleep of the *archôn*.

Priscus, who had a leading role (as *archôn*) in one of the Roman synagogal communities is here commemorated as a community-minded man by three typically Jewish adjectives: loving his people (*laos*), loving the commandments of God's Law, and loving the poor members of his community. For such epithets one will look in vain in pagan epitaphs.

43 *JIWE II 276: Rome, 3rd–4th Century*

- ἐνθάδε κείτε Ἀμάχις
 2. ὁ καὶ Πρίμος· μνήμη
 δικαίου εἰς εὐλογίαν
 4. οὗ ἀληθὴ τὰ ἐγκώ-
 μια· ἐν ἱρήνῃ {νη}
 6. ἡ κοίμησίς σου.

Here lies Amachius, who was also (called) Primus. The memory of the just man be for a blessing, whose laudations are true. In peace be your sleep.

Line 1–2: Ἀμάχις is a shortened form of Ἀμάχιος. Primus is almost certainly his nickname. Lines 2–5: The most interesting aspect of this epitaph is that the free biblical quote of Prov. 10:7 (*zekher tsaddiq livrakha*, ‘The memory of the righteous is (for) a blessing’) is here a mixture of the LXX and Aquila’s translation, with a contribution from the author of the epitaph himself. The LXX has: μνήμη δικαίων μετ’ ἐγκωμίων, and Aquila renders more literally: μνεία δικαίου εἰς εὐλογίαν. In our epitaph, μνήμη is taken from the LXX, δικαίου from Aquila, εἰς εὐλογίαν also from Aquila, οὗ ἀληθὴ is an invention of the composer of the epitaph, and τὰ ἐγκώμια is based upon μετ’ ἐγκωμίων of the LXX. Whether this is a conscious harmonizing of both versions or that the engraver knew both versions and mixed them up when working from memory, is hard to say. Be that as it may, at least it would seem to indicate that in the fourth century in the Jewish community of Rome both the LXX and Aquila were in use side by side and that the LXX version had not been discarded by the Jews (as is commonly assumed). Elsewhere we find this verse quoted in either the LXX version or Aquila’s. Together with 1 Sam. 25:29, the text of Prov. 10:7 became the most widely used biblical quote in Jewish epitaphs, up to the present day.

44 *JlWE II 68: Rome, 3rd–4th Century*

- ἐνθάδε κείτε ὁ Εὐσέβι—
 2. ς ὁ διδάσκα—
 λος νομο—
 4. μαθῆς σὺν
 τῇ συμβίου αὐ—
 6. τοῦ Εἰρήνη {η}

Here lies Eusebius the teacher, student of the Law, with his spouse Irene.

Line 1: The use of the definite article before a proper name is unusual in Jewish inscriptions. The form Eusebis reflects the shortened pronunciation of Eusebios. Lines 2–4: the combination διδάσκαλος νομομαθῆς seems to suggest that Eusebius was involved not only in study of the Torah but also in teaching it, although we have no historically reliable evidence for the existence of a rabbinic school in late antique Rome. Even so, there was of course a strong Jewish tradition of teaching the Law also outside rabbinic circles. Lines 4–6: Eusebius and his wife Irene shared a grave. The odd σὺν τῇ συμβίου αὐτοῦ Εἰρήνη instead of σὺν τῇ συμβίῳ αὐτοῦ Εἰρήνη is a case of morphological anticipation of the genitive ending of αὐτοῦ.

45 *JIWE I 53: Venosa, 5th Century*

- τάφος Καλ—
 2. λίστου νιπίου
 ἀρχισυναγώ—
 4. γου ἐτῶν γ' [μη—]
 νῶν γ'· ἐν [εἰ]ρέ[νῃ ἢ] κόμῃ[σιν αὐτοῦ].

Tomb of Callistus, a child, *archisynagōgos*, aged 3 years (and) 3 months.
 In peace be his sleep.

Line 2: νιπίου for νηπίου. Lines 3–4: The fact that a 3-year old boy bears the title of 'leader of the synagogue' makes clear that this title could be used in a purely honorific sense instead of as designation of a real functionary. A real *archisynagōgos* (in rabbinic parlance *ro'sh ha-keneseth*) was probably not the head of the congregation but the one who presided over the meetings in the synagogue and regulated the services there. Line 5: εἰρένη for εἰρήνη and κόμῃσιν for κοίμησις.

46 *JlWE I 59: Venosa, 5th Century*

- τάφος
 2. Βερωνικέ—
 νις πρεσβιτέ—
 4. ρες ετ φιλια
 Ἰωσέτις.

Tomb of Veronica, elder and daughter of Joses.

Line 2: The odd form Βερωνικένις is a genitive of the name Βερώνικη/Veronica; the stone-cutter tried to give it a Latin genitive ending on *-is* in spite of the fact that he also tried to write Greek. Line 3–4: πρεσβιτέρες stands for πρεσβυτέρας (the genitive ending on *-es* is common in later Latin). There are several inscriptions in which Jewish women are called πρεσβυτέρα. These inscriptions have often been interpreted as referring to ‘aged women’, a possible meaning of πρεσβυτέρα indeed. But the use of a patronymic here means that it makes no sense to describe her as ‘the elder one’ to distinguish her from a ‘younger one’ of the same name. Moreover, nothing is against taking the word as a feminine equivalent of πρεσβύτερος, and there is no doubt that πρεσβύτεροι (the *z^eqenim* of the rabbinic sources) is the technical term for the official members of the council of elders in each congregation. It is more natural to take the designation πρεσβυτέρα as implying real and active membership of the council of elders of the religious community. Nothing in their epitaphs suggests that these women derived this title from their husbands, even though a honorific use of this title cannot be ruled out completely. Line 4: ετ φιλια is simply the transcription of the Latin *et filia*. Line 5: Ἰωσέτις, again a Latin-like genitive ending.

47 *JIWE I 113: Venosa, 4th–5th Century**Marcus*2. *teuseves**qui vixit*4. *annu qui-**ndecim hic*6. *receptus est**in pac(e)*

Marcus the Godfearer, who lived fifteen years, was received here in peace.

Line 2: *teuseves* = θεοσεβής. The fact that the Greek term for a Godfearer (elsewhere also called σεβόμενος or φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν) is here simply transcribed (instead of translated—e.g., as *metuens*—as is done elsewhere) clearly indicates that this had already become a *terminus technicus*. It is remarkable that here a 15-year old boy is called a Godfearer (maybe because his parents were so). Line 4: *annu* for *annos* testifies to the drop of final -s in pronunciation and to *u* in final position being pronounced as *o*, a common phenomenon in vulgar Latin. Lines 6–7: One more usually finds *requiescit in pace*; the formula *receptus in pace* is more common among Christians.

48 *JIWE I 86: Venosa, Early 6th Century CE*

- Hic ciscued Faustina,*
 2. *filia Faustini pat(ris), annorum*
quattuordecim m̃nsurum
 4. *quinque, que fuet unica paren-*
turum, quei dixerunt tr̃gnus
 6. *duo apostuli et duo rebbites, et*
satis grandem dolurem fecet pa-
 8. *rentibus et lagremas cibitati.*
que fuet pronepus Faustini,
 10. *pat(ris), nepus Biti et Acelle,*
qui fuerunt maiures cibitatis.

Here lies Faustina, daughter of Faustinus her father, 14 years (and) 5 months old, who was the only (child) of her parents. Two apostles and two rabbis spoke a lament over her, and she caused a very great grief to her parents and tears to the community. She was the great-grandchild of Faustinus, father, and grandchild of Vitus and Asella, who were leaders of the community.

Between lines 8 and 9 of the Latin text (on either side of a picture of a menorah) one finds the following phrase in Hebrew:

mishkebah shel Phawstynah,
nuach nephesh, shalom.

משכבה של פווסטינה
 נוח נפש שלום

Resting place (or: bed) of Faustina; may (her) soul rest, peace.

Line 1: *ciscued* = *quiescit*. Line 3: *m̃nsurum*, as *tr̃gnus* in 5, oddly uses the Greek η in the middle of a text in Latin script; *m̃nsurum* = *mensium*. Line 4: *que fuet* = *quae fuit*. Line 4–5: *parenturum* instead of *parentum*, as if from *parentus*. Line 5: *quei* = *cui*; *tr̃gnus* = θρήνους. Oddly, the composer of the text here uses a transcription (except for the η) of a Greek word in a Latin text. Line 6: The terms *apostoli* (= *shelichim*) and *rebbites* at first sight look like exceptional references to emissaries of the Patriarch in Palestine and to rabbis, but if the inscription is from the early 6th century, the Palestinian Patriarchate no longer existed and it seems unlikely that the Babylonian Patriarch would be involved here. But the *rebbites* may well have been Palestinian rabbis who in the sixth century began to move westward. Line 7–8: *dolurem fecet parentibus* = *dolorem*

fecit parentibus. Line 8: *lagremas* = *lacrimas*; *cibitati* = *civitati*. In lines 8 and 11 *civitas* is taken by some to refer to the Jewish community, but it is more likely a designation of the city of Venosa. Line 9: *que fuet pronepus* = *quae fuit pronepos*. Line 10: *pater* is here probably a (late) designation of a high municipal official (it was often an abbreviation of *pater civitatis*), as is *maiures cibitatis* = *maiores civitatis* (civic leaders) in line 11; *nepus Biti et Acelle* = *nepos Viti et Asellae*.

49 *JlWE 1 26: Naples (?)*, of Uncertain Date

Claudia Aster

2. [H]ierosolymitana
captiva. Curam egit
4. [Ti(erius)] Claudius Aug(usti) libertus
[Pro(?)]culus. Rogo vos fac(ite)
6. [prae]ter licim ne quis
[mi]hi titulum deiciat cu-
8. [ra]m agatis. Vixit annis
XXV

Claudia Aster, prisoner of war from Jerusalem. Tiberius Claudius Proculus (?), imperial freedman, took care (of the inscription). I ask you to make sure that you take care that nobody casts down my inscription contrary to the law. She lived 25 years.

Line 1–4: This young woman was probably taken captive at the sack of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Aster, presumably a Latinized form of Hebrew Esther, may have been her original name, Claudia being the name she acquired from her new owner, Tiberius Claudius Proculus, himself a freedman of Claudius or Nero. In and after 70, many Jewish war captives were sold at the slave markets, also in Italy. It is unknown whether Tiberius Claudius Proculus was himself Jewish. He may have been Claudia Aster's husband (marriage was a reason for manumission). Tiberius Claudius Proculus politely urges those who read the inscription not to damage her grave, in particular the epitaph, which would be *praeter licim* = *praeter legem*.

50 *JIWE II 577: Unknown Provenance (Italy), 3rd–4th Century*

- Beturia Pau-*
 2. *lla {f} domi*
heterne quos-
 4. *tituta que bi-*
xit an(nos) LXXXVI meses VI
 6. *proselyta an(nos) XVI*
nominae Sara, mater
 8. *synagogarum Campi*
et Bolumni.
 10. *{b} en irenae ay cymisis*
autis.

Veturia Paula, placed in her eternal home, who lived 86 years (and) 6 months, a proselyte for 16 years with the name of Sarah, mother of the synagogues of Campus and Volumnius. In peace be her sleep.

The spelling of several words in this inscription is very instructive in terms of the pronunciation of both Latin and Greek in late antiquity. Line 2: The *f* is, like the *b* in line 10, a mistake by the stone-mason. Line 3: *heterne* = *aeternae* (*domus aeterna* / οἶκος αἰώνιος = *beth 'olam* = grave or cemetery). Lines 3–4: *quostituta* = *constituta*. Lines 4–5: *que bixit* = *quae vixit*. Line 5: *meses* = *menses*. Line 7: *nominae* = *nomine*. Lines 8–9: These synagogues are named after the Campus Martius, where it was situated, and after a certain Volumnius, presumably its patron, but the man is otherwise completely unknown. Lines 10–11: *en irenae ay cymisis autis* = ἐν εἰρήνῃ ἢ κοίμῃσις αὐτῆς. This formula, most frequently used among Roman Jews, is here left untranslated, possibly because it had become a fixed (liturgical?) formula.

This intriguing inscription shows us a woman who reached a very high age for her time, who converted to Judaism at the age of 70 (then she received her Hebrew name Sarah), and finally became ‘mother’ of no less than two synagogues. Unfortunately, we do not know what being a ‘mother of the synagogue’ implied in terms of duties or activities, but we can be sure that it bestowed great honour and prestige upon a woman, especially when she was originally non-Jewish. Veturia Paula must have been a rather impressive personality.

51 *JLWE 1183: Tortosa, Spain, 5th–6th Century (?)*

Shalom 'al Yisra'el.

Haqever hazeh shel MYLL'S' berath r

Yehudah u-leqira' Ma'res. Zekher tzadeqet

livrakhah. Nishmetah lechayye 'olam. Tenuach

naphshah bitzror he-chayyim. Amen, ken,

shalom.

in nomine Domini

hic est m[e]moria ubi re-

quiescit benememoria

Meliosa filia Iudanti et

Cura Maries. Vixit an-

[nos vigi]nti et quattuor

cum pace. amen.

[ἐν τῷ ὄν]ώ[μα]τι Κ(υρίο)υ·

ὡδε ἔστην με–

μν[ί]ον {ν} ὥπου ἀνα–

π[αύετ]αη πάμμνη–

στος Μ[ελιώσ]α φηληα Ἰύδαντ–

[ος καὶ Κ(υρ)ίας] Μάρες, ζήσ[ασα]

ἔτη εἴκοσι] τέσερα ἡν

[εἰρήνη· ἀμήν.]

Hebrew:

Peace be upon Israel. This tomb is of Mellasa, daughter of Rabbi Juda and of Lady Maria. The memory of the just woman is for a blessing. May her spirit have eternal life. May her soul rest in the bundle of life. Amen [...?] Peace.

Latin:

In the name of the Lord. Here is the tomb in which rests Meliosa, remembered for good, the daughter of Juda and of Lady Maria. She lived twenty-four years in peace. Amen.

Greek:

In the name of the Lord. Here is the tomb in which is at rest the all-remembered Meliosa, daughter of Juda and of Lady Maria. She lived twenty-four years in peace. Amen

In this unique inscription the text of the epitaph is given in three languages. There are a number of differences between the three versions of this epitaph. Those between the Latin and Greek versions are minimal, but those between the Hebrew and the other two are substantial, the most important one being that it is only in the Hebrew version that two biblical verses are quoted or alluded to, both Prov. 10:7 and 1Sam. 25:29. Since the reference to eternal life stands in between these two quotations, it is evident that these biblical verses are interpreted in an eschatological way here, as was often done in Jewish antiquity. It is only the Hebrew version that begins with a peace blessing. And only in the Hebrew version is the father, Juda(h), called 'rabbi' (the most probable meaning of the single *resh* at the end of line 2); the mother is called *Kyr(i)a* in all three versions.

The Greek has many spelling curiosities. In correct spelling it would be:

ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Κυρίου· ὧδε ἔστιν μνημεῖον ὅπου ἀναπαύεται πάμνηστος Μελι-
ώσα *filia* Ἰουδαντος καὶ Κυρίας Μάρης, ζήσασα ἔτη εἴκοσι τέσσαρα ἐν εἰρήνῃ·
ἀμήν. (Note the Latin *filia*.)

Bibliography

- F.M. Aber, 'Epitaphs: Testimonies to Jewish Living,' *Judaism* 6 (1957) 311–318.
- W. Ameling, *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis*: Vol. 11: *Kleinasien* (TSAJ 99; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).
- , 'Eine liturgische Inschrift aus der Synagoge von Sardes,' in *Klassisches Altertum, Spätantike und frühes Christentum* (Fs A. Lippold) (Würzburg: Der christliche Osten, 1993), 495–508.
- , 'Die jüdische Diaspora Kleinasien und der 'epigraphic habit',' in J. Frey, D. Schwartz, S. Gripentrog (eds.), *Jewish Identity in the Greco-Roman World* (AJEC 71; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 253–282.
- , 'The Epigraphic Habit and the Jewish Diasporas of Asia Minor and Syria,' in H.M. Cotton, R.G. Hoyland, J.J. Price & D.J. Wasserstein (eds.), *From Hellenism to Islam: Cultural and Linguistic Change in the Roman Near East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 203–234.
- W. Ameling et alii, *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae, volume 11: Caesarea and the Middle Coast: 1121–2160* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2011).
- F. Avemarie, 'Jüdische Diasporagemeinden in der Antike: Ihr Selbstverständnis im Spiegel der Inschriften,' in H.J. Körtner (ed.), *Kirche—Christus—Kerygma: Profil und Identität evangelischer Kirche(n)* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag 2009), 21–61; reprinted in his *Neues Testament und früh rabbinisches Judentum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).
- N. Avigad, *Beth She'arim 111: Catacombs 12–23* (Jerusalem: Massada, 1976).
- B. Bagatti—J.T. Milik, *Gli scavi del "Dominus Flevit" (Monte Oliveto-Gerusalemme) 1: La necropoli del periodo romano* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Publishing House, 1958).
- R.S. Bagnall & B.W. Frier, *The Demography of Roman Egypt* (Cambridge Studies in Population, Economy and Society in Past Time 23; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- J.G.M. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora From Alexander to Trajan* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1996).
- J. Barr, 'Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek in the Hellenistic Age,' in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, ed. W.D. Davies & L. Finkelstein, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1989), 79–114.
- F. Bérard—D. Feissel e.a., *Guide de l'épigraphiste. Bibliographie choisie des épigraphies antiques et médiévales* (Paris: Éditions Rue d'Ulm, 2000; 3rd ed.).
- E. Bernard, *Inscriptions métriques de l'Égypte gréco-romaine* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1969).
- H.W. Beyer—H. Lietzmann, *Die jüdische Katakomben der Villa Torlonia in Rom* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1930).

- E. Bickerman, 'The Altars of Gentiles. A Note on the Jewish 'ius sacrum',' in his *Studies in Jewish and Christian History* II (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 324–346; in the new edition (AJEC 68, Leiden: Brill, 2007), 596–617.
- A. Bij de Vaate & J.W. van Henten, 'Jewish or Non-Jewish? Some Remarks on the Identification of Jewish Inscriptions of Asia Minor,' *BiOr* 53 (1996) 16–28.
- F.J. Blass, A. Debrunner & F. Rehkopf, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975; 14th ed. or later),
- J. Bodel (ed.), *Epigraphic Evidence: Ancient History from Inscriptions* (London & New York: Routledge, 2001).
- Y. le Bohec, 'Inscriptions juives et judaïsantes de l'Afrique Romaine,' *Antiquités Africaines* 17 (1981) 165–207.
- , 'Juifs et judaïsants dans l'Afrique Romaine,' *Antiquités Africaines* 17 (1981) 209–229.
- B. Boyaval, 'Remarques sur les indications d'âges dans l'épigraphie funéraire grecque d'Égypte,' *ZPE* 21 (1976) 217–243.
- , 'Tableau général des indications d'âge de l'Égypte gréco-romaine,' *Chronique d'Égypte* 52 (1977) 345–351.
- C. Brixhe, *Essai sur le grec anatolien du début de notre ère* (Nancy: Presses universitaires de Nancy, 1984).
- B.J. Brooten, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue: Inscriptional Evidence and Background Issues* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982).
- A.R. Burn, 'Hic brevis vivitur. A Study of the Expectation of Life in the Roman Empire,' *Past & Present* 4 (1953) 1–31.
- , Review of Nordberg, *Biometrical Notes* (1963), *JRS* 55 (1965) 253–257.
- J.T. Burtchaell, *From Synagogue to Church: Public Services and Offices in the Earliest Christian Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
- A. Byatt, 'Josephus and Population Numbers in First Century Palestine,' *PEQ* 105 (1973) 51–60.
- A. Calderini, *Epigrafia* (Torino: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1974).
- S. Cappelletti, 'Biblical Quotations in the Greek Jewish Inscriptions of the Diaspora,' in N.R.M. de Lange, J.G. Krivoruchko & C. Boyd-Taylor (eds.), *Jewish Reception of Greek Bible Versions* (TSMJ 23; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 128–141.
- M.A. Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- A. Chaniotis, 'The Jews of Aphrodisias: New Evidence and Old Problems,' *Studia Classica Israelica* 21 (2002) 209–242.
- A. Chester, 'Jewish Inscriptions and Jewish Life,' in R. Deines, J. Herzer & K.-W. Niebuhr (eds.), *Neues Testament und hellenistisch-jüdische Alltagskultur* (WUNT 274; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 383–442.
- M. Clauss, 'Probleme der Lebensalterstatistiken aufgrund römischer Grabinschriften,' *Chiron* 3 (1973) 395–417.

- C. Claußen, *Versammlung, Gemeinde, Synagoge: Das hellenistisch-jüdische Umfeld der frühchristlichen Gemeinden* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002).
- S.J.D. Cohen, 'Epigraphical Rabbis,' *JQR* 72 (1981/82) 1–17.
- , 'Respect for Judaism by Gentiles According to Josephus,' *HTR* 80 (1987) 409–430.
- A. Collar, *Religious Networks in the Roman Empire: The Spread of New Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
- B.F. Cook, *Greek Inscriptions* (London: British Museum, 1987).
- H.M. Cotton, W.E.H. Cockle & F.G.B. Millar, 'The Papyrology of the Roman Near East,' *JRS* 85 (1995) 214–235.
- H.M. Cotton, *et alii*, *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae. Vol. 1: Jerusalem (Part 1): 1–704* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2010).
- H.M. Cotton, *et alii*, *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae, Vol. 1: Jerusalem (Part 2): 705–1120* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2012).
- G. Dellling, 'Die Altarinschrift eines Gottesfürchtigen in Pergamon,' in his *Studien zum Neuen Testament und zum hellenistischen Judentum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 32–38.
- K. Dieterich, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der griechischen Sprache von der hellenistischen Zeit bis zum 10. Jhdt. n. Chr.* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1898; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1970).
- E. Dinkler, 'Schalom—Eirene—Pax: Jüdische Sepulkralinschriften und ihr Verhältnis zum frühen Christentum,' *Riv. Arch. Crist.* 50 (1974) 121–144.
- C. Duncan, 'Inscribing Authority: Female Title Bearers in Jewish Inscriptions,' *Religions* 3/1 (2012) 37–49 [non vidi].
- R.P. Duncan Jones, 'Age-Rounding, Illiteracy and Social Differentiation in the Roman Empire,' *Chiron* 7 (1977) 333–353.
- A. Edrei & D. Mendels, 'A Split Jewish Diaspora: Its Dramatic Consequences,' *JSP* 16 (2007) 91–137 and 17 (2008) 163–187.
- O. Eissfeldt, *Der Beutel der Lebendigen* (Berichte über die Verhandlungen der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Phil.-hist. Klasse 105,6; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1960).
- U.M. Fasola, 'Le due catacombe ebraiche di Villa Torlonia,' *Riv. Arch. Crist.* 52 (1976) 7–62.
- D. Feissel, 'La Bible dans les inscriptions grecques,' in C. Mondésert (ed.), *Le monde grec ancien et la Bible* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1984), 223–231.
- L.H. Feldman, 'Proselytes and "Sympathizers" in the Light of the New Inscriptions from Aphrodisias,' *REJ* 148 (1989) 265–305.
- , *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interaction from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).
- , *Studies in Hellenistic Judaism* (AGAJU 30; Leiden: Brill, 1996).

- , 'Diaspora Synagogues: New Light from Inscriptions and Papyri,' in S. Fine (ed.), *Sacred Realm. The Emergence of the Synagogue in the Ancient World* (New York—Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 48–66.
- A. Ferrua, 'Addenda et corrigenda al C1J,' *Epigraphica* 3 (1941) 30–46.
- P. Figueras, *Decorated Jewish Ossuaries* (Leiden: Brill, 1983).
- U. Fischer, *Eschatologie und Jenseitserwartung im hellenistischen Diasporajudentum* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1978).
- J.A. Fitzmyer, 'The Languages of Palestine in the First Century A.D.' in his *A Wandering Aramean. Collected Aramaic Essays* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979), 29–56.
- J.B. Frey, *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum* (2 vols.; Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1936–1952; reprint of vol. 1 with a Prolegomenon by B. Lifshitz, New York: Ktav, 1975).
- B. Frier, 'Roman Life Expectancy. The Pannonian Evidence,' *Phoenix* 37 (1983) 328–344.
- K. Gallig, 'Die jüdischen Katakomben in Rom als ein Beitrag zur jüdischen Konfessionskunde,' *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 103 (1931) 352–360.
- E.L. Gibson, *The Jewish Manumission Inscriptions of the Bosphorus Kingdom* (TSAJ 75; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999).
- F.T. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (2 vols.; Milano: Cisalpino-Goliardica, 1975–1981).
- E.R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* 11 (New York: Pantheon, 1953).
- , 'An Early Christian Bread Stamp,' *HTR* 57 (1964) 133–137.
- M. Goodman, *Mission and Conversion: Proselytizing in the Religious History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).
- , *Judaism in the Roman World* (AJEC 66; Leiden: Brill, 2007).
- , 'Jews and Judaism in the Mediterranean Diaspora,' in his *Judaism in the Roman World* 233–259.
- , 'Sacred Space in Diaspora Judaism,' in his *Judaism in the Roman World* 219–231.
- , 'Under the Influence: Hellenism in Ancient Jewish Life,' *BAR* 36, 1 (2010) 64–67.
- C.H. Grandgent, *An Introduction to Vulgar Latin* (New York: Hafner, 1962).
- B.A. van Groningen, *Greek Palaeography* (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1967).
- E.S. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge MA—London: Harvard University Press, 2002).
- R. Hachlili, 'The Goliath Family in Jericho: Funerary Inscriptions from a First-Century A.D. Jewish Monumental Tomb,' *BASOR* 235 (1979) 31–65.
- , *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology in the Land of Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 1988).
- M. Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture: Fusion and Diffusion* (New York—London: Columbia University Press, 1959).
- H.A. Harris, *Greek Athletics and the Jews* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1976).

- M. Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus: Studien zu ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Palästinas bis zur Mitte des 2. Jh.s v. Chr.* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1969, numerous reprints; E.T.: *Judaism and Hellenism*, London: SCM Press, 1974).
- , *The 'Hellenization' of Judaea in the First Century after Christ* (London: SCM Press, 1990).
- , 'Jerusalem als jüdische und hellenistische Stadt,' in his *Judaica, hellenistica et christiana: Kleine Schriften II* (WUNT 109; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 115–156.
- , 'Der vorchristliche Paulus,' in his *Paulus und Jakobus. Kleine Schriften III* (WUNT 141; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 69–192.
- C. Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (TSAJ 81; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001).
- , *Jewish Travel in Antiquity* (TSAJ 144; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).
- K.G. Holum, R.L. Hohlfelder, R.J. Bull, A. Raban, *King Herod's Dream: Caesarea on the Sea* (New York—London: Norton, 1988).
- J.J.E. Hondius, *Saxa Loquuntur: Inleiding tot de grieksche epigraphiek* (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1938; repr. Chicago: Ares, 1976).
- W. Horbury & D. Noy *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
- W. Horbury et alii (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism, vol. 3: The Early Roman Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- , 'Women in the Synagogue,' in Horbury et al. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism, vol. 3*, 358–401.
- G. Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and Its Speakers* (London & New York: Longman, 1997).
- G.H.R. Horsley et al., *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* (10 vols., North Ryde, N.S.W.: Macquarie Ancient History Documentary Research Centre & Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981–2012).
- P.W. van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* (SVTP 4; Leiden: Brill, 1978).
- , "'Lord, Help the Rabbi.'" The Interpretation of SEG XXI 1578B,' *JJS* 38 (1987) 102–106.
- , 'Jews and Christians in Aphrodisias in the Light of Their Relations in Other Cities of Asia Minor,' *NTT* 43 (1989) 106–122.
- , *Essays on the Jewish World of Early Christianity* (NTOA 10; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag—Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990).
- , *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs. An Introductory Survey of a Millennium of Jewish Funerary Epigraphy (300 BCE–700 CE)* (CEBT 2; Kampen: Kok-Pharos, 1991).
- , 'Jewish Poetical Tomb Inscriptions,' in J.W. van Henten & P.W. van der Horst (eds.), *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy* (AGAJU 21; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 129–147.
- , 'Greek in Jewish Palestine in the Light of Epigraphy,' in J.J. Collins & G.E. Sterling (eds.), *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 154–174.

- , *Japheth in the Tents of Shem: Studies on Jewish Hellenism in Antiquity* (CEBT 32; Leuven: Peeters, 2002).
- , *Philo's Flaccus. The First Pogrom* (PACS 2; Leiden: Brill, 2003).
- , 'Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis: A Review Article,' *JSJ* 36 (2005) 65–83.
- , "‘The Most Superstitious and Disgusting of All Nations.’ Diogenes of Oenoanda on the Jews,' in A.P.M.H. Lardinois, M.G.M. van der Poel & V.J.C. Hunink (eds.), *Land of Dreams. Greek and Latin Studies in Honour of A.H.M. Kessels* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 291–298.
- , *Jews and Christians in Their Graeco-Roman Context: Selected Essays on Early Judaism, Samaritanism, Hellenism, and Christianity* (WUNT 196; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).
- , 'His Days Shall Be One Hundred and Twenty Years: Genesis 6:3 in Early Judaism and Ancient Christianity,' in his *Jews and Christians in Their Graeco-Roman Context* 66–70.
- , 'The Jews of Ancient Phrygia,' *EJJS* 2 (2008 [2009]) 283–292.
- , 'Biblical Quotations in Judaeo-Greek Inscriptions,' in B.J. Koet, S. Moyise & J. Verheyden (eds.), *The Scriptures of Israel in Jewish and Christian Tradition: Essays in Honour of Maarten J.J. Menken* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 148; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 363–376.
- , 'Judaism in Asia Minor,' in M.R. Salzman & W. Adler (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Religions in Antiquity, Volume 11: From the Hellenistic Age to Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 321–340.
- , *Studies in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (AJEC 87; Leiden: Brill, 2014).
- , 'Jewish-Greek Epigraphy in Antiquity,' in J.K. Aitken and J. Carleton Paget (eds.), *The Jewish-Greek Tradition in Antiquity and the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 215–228.
- T. Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity* (4 vols., TSAJ 91, 126, 141, 148; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002–2012).
- M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York: Pardes Publishing House, 1950, repr. of the 1903 ed.).
- J. Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'empire romain* (2 vols.; Paris: Geuthner, 1914).
- I. Kajanto, *On the Problem of the Average Duration of Life in the Roman Empire* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1968).
- L.H. Kant, 'Jewish Inscriptions in Greek and Latin,' *ANRW* II 20,2 (1987) 671–713.
- G. Klaffenbach, *Griechische Epigraphik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966).
- S. Klein, *Jüdisch-Palästinisches Corpus Inscriptionum (Ossuar-, Grab- und Synagogeninschriften)* (Pressburg: Loewit, 1920).
- M. Kleywegt, *Ancient Youth. The Ambiguity of Youth and the Absence of Adolescence in Greco-Roman Society* (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1991).

- A. Konikoff, *Sarcophagi from the Jewish Catacombs of Ancient Rome. A catalogue raisonnée* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1990).
- A.T. Kraabel, 'Jews in Imperial Rome,' *JJS* 30 (1979) 41–58.
- R.S. Kraemer, 'Hellenistic Jewish Women. The Epigraphical Evidence,' *SBL Seminar Papers* 1986, 183–200.
- , 'On the Meaning of the Term 'Jew' in Greco-Roman Inscriptions,' *HTR* 81 (1989) 35–53.
- , 'Jewish Women in the Diaspora World of Late Antiquity,' in J.R. Baskin (ed.), *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 43–67.
- , 'Jewish Tuna and Christian Fish: Identifying Religious Affiliation in Epigraphic Sources,' *HTR* 84 (1991) 141–162.
- , *Her Share of the Blessings: Women's Religions Among Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greco-Roman World* (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
- S. Krauss, *Synagogale Altertümer* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1966; repr. of the Berlin 1922 ed.).
- P. Kretschmer, 'Die Inschriften der jüdischen Katakomben am Monte Verde,' *Glotta* 12 (1923) 192–194.
- J.H. Kroll, 'The Greek Inscriptions of the Sardis Synagogue,' *HTR* 94 (2001) 5–127.
- R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986).
- N.R.M. de Lange, 'A Gold Votive Medaillon in the Jewish Museum, London,' *Zutot* 1 (2001) 48–55.
- N.R.M. de Lange, J.G. Krivoruchko & C. Boyd-Taylor (eds.), *Jewish Reception of Greek Bible Versions* (TSMJ 23; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).
- R. Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1942, repr. 1962).
- H.J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1960; rev. ed. by C. Osiek, Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999).
- , 'The Jews of Venusia,' *JQR* 44 (1953–1954) 267–284.
- , 'The Language of the Greek Inscriptions from the Jewish Catacombs at Rome,' *TPAPA* 58 (1927) 210–233.
- L.I. Levine, *The Rabbinic Class of Roman Palestine in Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem—New York: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi—The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1989).
- , *Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity: Conflict or Confluence?* (Seattle—London: University of Washington Press, 1998).
- , *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000).
- I. Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its First-Century Setting*, vol. 5: *Diaspora Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans—Carlisle: Pater Noster, 1996).
- D.M. Lewis, 'Appendix 1: The Jewish Inscriptions of Egypt,' in: V.A. Tcherikover, A. Fuks,

- M. Stern (eds.), *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* (3 vols., Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1957–1964) 3:138–166.
- S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1942, 2nd ed. 1965).
- , *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1950).
- H. Lietzmann, 'Jüdisch-griechische Inschriften aus Tell el Yehudieh,' *ZNW* 22 (1923) 280–286.
- B. Lifshitz 'Fonctions et titres honorifiques dans les communautés juives,' *RB* 67 (1960) 58–64.
- , 'La vie de l'au-delà dans les conceptions juives. Inscriptions grecques de Beth She'arim,' *RB* 68 (1961) 401–411.
- , 'Les Juifs de Venosa,' *Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica* 90 (1962) 367–371.
- , 'Beiträge zur palästinischen Epigraphik,' *ZDPV* 78 (1962) 64–88.
- , 'L'hellénisation des Juifs en Palestine,' *RB* 72 (1965) 520–538.
- , 'Notes d'épigraphie palestinienne,' *RB* 73 (1966) 248–257.
- , 'Beiträge zur griechisch-jüdischen Epigraphik,' *ZDPV* 82 (1966) 57–63.
- , *Donateurs et fondateurs dans les synagogues juives* (Paris: Gabalda, 1967).
- , 'Du nouveau sur l'hellénisation des Juifs de Palestine,' *Euphrosyne* n.s. 3 (1970) 113–133.
- , 'Varia epigraphica,' *Euphrosyne* n.s. 6 (1973–1974) 23–48.
- , 'Varia epigraphica,' *Epigraphica* 26 (1974) 78–100.
- G. Lüderitz, *Corpus jüdischer Zeugnisse aus der Cyrenaika* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1983).
- B.H. McLean, *An Introduction to Greek Epigraphy of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods from Alexander the Great down to the Reign of Constantine (323 B.C.–A.D. 337)* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002).
- R. MacMullen, 'The Epigraphic Habit in the Roman Empire,' *AJPh* 103 (1982) 233–246.
- P. Mastandrea, *Un neoplatonico latino: Cornelio Labeone (testimonianze e frammenti)* (EPRO 77; Leiden: Brill, 1979).
- B. Mazar, *Beth She'arim 1: Catacombs 1–4* (Jerusalem: Massada Press, 1973).
- D. Mendels & A. Edrei, *Zweierlei Diaspora: Zur Spaltung der antiken jüdischen Welt* (Toldot 8; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010).
- E.A. Meyer, 'Explaining the Epigraphic Habit in the Roman Empire: The Evidence of Epitaphs,' *JRS* 80 (1990) 74–96.
- E.M. Meyers & A.Th. Kraabel, 'Archaeology, Iconography, and Non-Literary Written Remains,' in R.A. Kraft & G.W.E. Nickelsburg (eds.), *Early Judaism and its Modern Interpreters* (Atlanta: Scholars Press—Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 175–210.
- E. Miranda, 'La comunità giudaica di Hierapolis di Frigia,' *Epigraphica Anatolica* 31 (1999) 109–156.
- S. Mitchell, *Anatolia. Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

- , 'The Cult of Theos Hypsistos Between Pagans, Jews, and Christians,' in P. Athanassiadi & M. Frede (eds.), *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 81–148.
- , 'Further Thoughts on the Cult of Theos Hypsistos,' in S. Mitchell & P. van Nuffelen (eds.), *One God: Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 167–208.
- L. Moretti, 'Statistica demografica ed epigrafia: durata media della vita in Roma imperiale,' *Epigraphica* 21 (1959) 60–78.
- N. Müller—N.A. Bees, *Die Inschriften der jüdischen Katakombe am Monteverde zu Rom* (Leipzig: Harassowitz, 1919).
- G. Mussies, *The Morphology of Koine Greek As Used in the Apocalypse of St. John: A Study in Bilingualism* (Leiden: Brill, 1971).
- , 'Greek in Palestine and the Diaspora,' in S. Safrai—M. Stern (eds.), *The Jewish People in the First Century* (CRINT 1 2; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1976), 1040–1064.
- , 'Jewish Personal Names in Some Non-Literary Sources,' in J.W. van Henten & P.W. van der Horst (eds.), *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy* (AGAJU 21; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 242–276.
- J. Naveh, *On Stone and Mosaic: The Aramaic and Hebrew Inscriptions from Ancient Synagogues* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1978) [Hebrew].
- , 'Varia Epigraphica Judaica,' *Israel Oriental Studies* 9 (1979) 17–31.
- M.P. Nilsson, 'Zwei Altäre aus Pergamon,' *Eranos* 54 (1956) 167–173.
- H. Nordberg, *Biometrical Notes. The information on Ancient Christian Inscriptions from Rome Concerning the Duration of Life and the Dates of Birth and Death* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1963).
- D. Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe I: Italy (excluding the City of Rome), Spain and Gaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
- , *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe II: The City of Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
- , 'The Jewish Communities of Leontopolis and Venosa,' in J.W. van Henten & P.W. van der Horst (eds.), *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy* (AGAJU 21; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 162–182.
- , 'Writing in Tongues: The Use of Greek, Latin and Hebrew in Jewish Inscriptions from Roman Italy,' *JJS* 48 (1997) 300–311.
- D. Noy, A. Panayotov & H. Bloedhorn, *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis: Vol. I, Eastern Europe* (TSAJ 101; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).
- D. Noy & H. Bloedhorn, *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis: Vol. III: Syria and Cyprus* (TSAJ 102; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).
- J. Oehler, 'Epigraphische Beiträge zur Geschichte des Judentums,' *MGWJ* 53 (1909) 292–302; 443–452; 525–538.

- M. Ogle, 'The Sleep of Death,' *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 11 (1933) 81–117.
- J.S. Park, *Conceptions of Afterlife in Jewish Inscriptions* (WUNT 11 121; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).
- A. Parrot, *Malédiction et violations de tombes* (Paris: Geuthner, 1939).
- W. Peek, *Griechische Grabgedichte* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1960).
- A. Pietersma & B.G. Wright (eds.), *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (New York—Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- R.H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times* (New York: Harper, 1949).
- G. Pfohl, 'Grabinschrift (griechisch),' *RAC* 12 (1983) 467–514.
- Ch. Pietri, 'Grabinschrift (lateinisch),' *RAC* 12 (1983) 514–590.
- C.R. Phillips, 'Rosalia,' *DNP* 10 (2001) 1134–1135.
- S.E. Porter, 'Jesus and the Use of Greek in Galilee,' in B. Chilton & C.A. Evans (eds.), *Studying the Historical Jesus* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 139–142.
- J.J. Price and H. Misgav, 'Jewish Inscriptions and Their Use,' in Sh. Safrai, Z. Safrai, J. Schwartz, P.J. Tomson (eds.), *The Literature of the Sages, Part 2* (CRINT 11/3b; Assen: Royal Van Gorcum—Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 461–483.
- J.J. Price, 'The Necropolis of Jaffa and Its Relation to Beth She'arim,' in B. Isaac & Y. Shahar (eds.), *Judaea-Palaestina, Babylon and Rome: Jews in Antiquity* (TSAJ 147; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 215–226.
- E. Puech, 'Inscriptions funéraires palestiniennes,' *RB* 90 (1983) 481–533.
- Ch. Rabin, 'Hebrew and Aramaic in the First Century,' in S. Safrai & M. Stern (eds.), *The Jewish People in the First Century 2* (CRINT 1 2; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1976), 1007–1039.
- Y. Rahmani, *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries in the Collections of the State of Israel* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994).
- T. Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society* (London: Duckworth, 1983).
- , *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome* (AGAJU 48; Leiden: Brill, 2001).
- , *Translation and Survival: The Greek Bible of the Ancient Jewish Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
- T. Rajak & D. Noy, 'Archisynagogoi: Office, Title and Social Status in the Graeco-Jewish Synagogue,' *JRS* 83 (1993) 75–93.
- J. Reynolds & R. Tannenbaum, *Jews and Godfearers at Aphrodisias* (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1987).
- L. Robert, *Hellenica* (13 vols.; Paris: Maisonneuve, 1940–1965).
- L. et J. Robert, *Bulletin Épigraphique* (10 vols. + 5 index vols., Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1972–1987).
- H.B. Rosén, 'Die Sprachsituation im römischen Palästina,' in his *East and West: Selected Writings in Linguistics*, vol. 1 (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1982), 480–505.
- L. Roth-Gerson, *The Greek Inscriptions from the Synagogues in Israel* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, 1987) [Hebrew].

- A. Runesson, D.D. Binder & B. Olsson, *The Ancient Synagogue from its Origins to 200 CE: A Source Book* (AJEC 72; Leiden: Brill, 2008).
- L.V. Rutgers, *The Jews of Late Ancient Rome* (RGRW 126; Leiden: Brill, 1995).
- J.E. Sandys—S.G. Campbell, *Latin Epigraphy* (Groningen: Bouma's Boekhuis, repr. 1969).
- A. Scheiber, *Jewish Inscriptions in Hungary from the Third Century to 1686* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó—Leiden: Brill, 1983).
- R. Schmitt, 'Die Sprachverhältnisse in den östlichen Provinzen des Römischen Reiches,' *ANRW* II 29, 2 (1983), 554–586.
- E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (3 vols. in 4, rev. ed. by G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Goodman, Edinburgh: Clark, 1973–1987).
- M. Schwabe—B. Lifshitz, *Beth She'arim II: The Greek Inscriptions* (Jerusalem: Massada, 1974).
- A.R. Seager & A.T. Kraabel, 'The Synagogue and the Jewish Community,' in G.M.A. Hanfmann (ed.), *Sardis from Prehistoric to Roman Times* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 168–190.
- J.N. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek? How Much Greek Could the First Jewish Christians Have Known?* (Leiden: Brill, 1968).
- M. Simon, ἄρρει, οὐδεὶς ἀθάνατος, in his *Le christianisme antique et son contexte religieux* I (Tübingen: Mohr, 1981), 63–81.
- J.Z. Smith, 'Fences and Neighbors,' in W.S. Green (ed.), *Approaches to Ancient Judaism* II (Chico: Scholars Press, 1980), 1–25.
- H. Solin, 'Juden und Syrer im westlichen Teil der römischen Welt,' *ANRW* II 29, 2 (1983) 587–789.
- B. Spolsky, 'Jewish Multilingualism in the First Century: An Essay in Historical Sociolinguistics,' in J.A. Fishman (ed.), *Readings in the Sociology of Jewish Languages* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 35–51.
- G. Stemberger, 'Juden,' *RAC* 19 (2001) 160–228.
- M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (3 vols., Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974–1984).
- E. Stommel, 'Domus Aeterna,' *RAC* 4 (1959) 109–128.
- J.H.M. Strubbe, 'Curses against Violations of the Grave in Jewish Epitaphs from Asia Minor,' in J.W. van Henten & P.W. van der Horst (eds.), *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy* (AGAJU 21; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 70–128.
- V. Tcherikover—A. Fuks, *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* (3 vols., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957–1964).
- P. Thomsen, *Die lateinischen und griechischen Inschriften der Stadt Jerusalem* (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1922).
- , 'Die lateinischen und griechischen Inschriften der Stadt Jerusalem,' *ZDPV* 64 (1941) 203–256.

- M.N. Tod, 'Laudatory Epithets in Greek Epitaphs,' *Annual of the British School at Athens* 46 (1951) 182–190.
- P. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (SNTSMS 69; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
- , 'The Christian and Jewish Eumeneian Formula,' in J.M.G. Barclay (ed.), *Negotiating Diaspora: Jewish Strategies in the Roman Empire* (London-New York: Clark—Continuum, 2004), 66–88.
- K. Treu, 'Die Bedeutung des Griechischen für die Juden im römischen Reich,' *Kairos* 15 (1973) 123–144.
- A.M. Vérilhac, Πάϊδες ἄωροι. *Poésie funéraire* (2 vols.; Athens: Athens' Academy Press, 1978–1982).
- M. Waelkens, *Die kleinasiatischen Türsteine* (Mainz: Philip von Zabern, 1986).
- B. Wanders, *Gottesfürchtige und Sympathisanten* (WUNT 104; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998).
- M.H. Williams, *The Jews Among Greeks and Roman. A Diasporan Sourcebook* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).
- , 'The Jews of Corycus—A Neglected Diasporan Community from Roman Times,' *JSJ* 25 (1994) 274–286.
- , 'The Meaning and Function of Ioudaios in Graeco-Roman Inscriptions,' *ZPE* 116 (1997) 249–262.
- , 'The Contribution of Jewish Inscriptions to the Study of Judaism,' in W. Horbury *et alii* (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism, vol. 111: The Early Roman Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 75–93.
- , 'Jewish Inscriptions of the Graeco-Roman Period—An Update,' *Bulletin of Judaeo-Greek Studies* 33 (2003–2004) 40–46.
- , 'The Epigraphy of the Jewish Diaspora since the Publication of Schürer (revised, vol. 111, 1986),' *Bulletin of Judaeo-Greek Studies* 35 (2004–2005) 26–33.
- , 'Jewish Festal Names in Antiquity: A Neglected Area of Onomastic Research,' *JSJ* 36 (2005) 21–40.
- , *Jews in a Graeco-Roman Environment* (WUNT 312; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).
- M. Wolfe & R.P. Martin, *Cut These Words into My Stone: Ancient Greek Epitaphs* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013).
- A.G. Woodhead, *The Study of Greek Inscriptions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).
- G. Zuntz, *Griechische philosophische Hymnen* (hrsgg. von H. Cancik & L. Käppel; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

Index of Ancient Sources

1	Bible		
Old Testament		Proverbs	
Genesis		10:7	62, 137, 145, 154,
6:3	51–52		164
14:18	135	Job	
Exodus		34:23	136
3:14	42	Esther	
Leviticus		5:1	136
23:29	136		
Numbers		New Testament	
24:16	135	Matthew	
Deuteronomy		6:20	106
28:28–29	33	Mark	
1Samuel		3:31–32	75
25:29	62, 164	15:21	74
Joel		Luke	
4:13	34	7:4–5	61, 116
Micah		Acts	
6:6	135	2:9–11	46
Zechariah		16:14	31
5:1	34	18:24	74
Maleachi		21:27–36	97
4:2	136	Galatians	
Psalms		1:19	75
81:6	135	Hebrews	
84:12	136	1:14	136

2 Early Jewish Literature

Josephus		Philo	
<i>Antiquitates Judaicae</i>		<i>Legatio ad Gaium</i>	
15.417	97	214	46
16.163–164	28, 45	<i>Oracula Sibyllina</i>	
16.164	128	3:271	46
20.200	73	Mishna	
20.201	75	<i>Sanhedrin</i>	
<i>Bellum Judaicum</i>		10.1	105
2.398	46	<i>Middot</i>	
5.194	97	1.4; 2.3	99
7.43	46	Tosefta	
7.43–45	40	<i>Yoma</i>	
<i>Contra Apionem</i>		2.3–4	99
2.282	37		

Babylonian Talmud*Yoma*

38a 99

3 Early Christian Literature**Gregory of Nazianze***Oratio* 18.5 37*1 Clement* 64

136

4 Pagan Literature**Homer***Iliad*

3.277 136

Odyssey

11.109 136

Macrobius*Saturnalia*

1.18.19–20 38

Pliny the Elder*Naturalis Historia*

5.29.106 36

Seneca ap. Augustine*De Civitate Dei*

6.11 46

Strabo*Geographia*

12.8.13 36

13.4.14 31

Strabo ap. Josephus*Ant. Jud.*

14.115 46

5 Jewish Inscriptions***Beth She'arim (BS)***

2.127 49, 104

2.129 105

2.162 63

2.183 106

2.194 63

Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae**(CIP)**

2 97

9 53, 98

54 100

55 101

98 99

348 103

531 67–87

566 102

1001 35

Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis I (IJO I)

Ach1 140

Ach16 48

Ach26 48

Ach32 48

Ach34 48

Ach42 26, 59, 141

Ach43 59

Ach44 59

Ach45 26, 49

Ach51 142

Ach53 49

Ach55 48

Ach70 135

Ach72 138

BS5–9 59, 60

BS7 130, 132

BS17–25 59

BS20 26

BS20–22	60
BS22	26
Cre3	55, 62, 137
Dal2	144
Mac1	57, 133
Thr3	55

Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis III (IJO III)

Syr11	49
Syr53	113
Syr80	115
Cyp3	139

Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis II (IJO II)

5a	45
14	9, 45, 61, 118–120
16	124
22	49
25	45, 55
27	32
36	45
37	49
43	45, 55
132	44
134	125
146	128
168	31, 61, 116
170	33
171	32, 49
172	43
173	33, 43
174	33
175	33, 45
176	34, 45
177	34
180	34
184	35
187	29
188	30
189	30
191	30, 126
192	30
193	30
196	30, 31
198	30
199	30
200	30
202	30
205	30, 31
206	30, 31
208	30
218	41
236	63, 130

Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt (JIGRE)

33	26, 107
34	49, 109
38	49, 110
39	49, 111
84	57
121	26, 49
122	26, 49
141	49

Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe I (JIWE I)

22	58
26	161
53	54, 156
56	58
59	55, 157
62	55
68	155
72	55
75	23
86	58, 159
113	158
120	62
122	62
131	62
133	62
137	62
152	145
163	55, 57
174	151
183	163
186	58

Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe II (JIWE II)

5	55
103	63–64, 146
112	62
113	48
212	57, 152
238	48

Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe II
(*JIWE II*) (*cont.*)

240	57, 153
251	55
271	57
276	62, 154
281	57
307	62
360	34
463	151
483	149
489	148
502	57
508	48
537	150

542	55
547	6
556	147
561	48
564	57
576	57
577	55, 162
604–612	26

Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum
(*SEG*)

viii 247–261	20
xxi 1578b	1
xxvi 933	38
xlii 1439–1454	20

Index of Modern Scholars

- Ameling, W. 5, 8, 11, 12, 19, 28, 31, 33, 39, 41, 44
 Avemarie, F. 18, 30, 45, 53
 Avigad, N. 4
 Avi-Yonah, M. 68
 Ayalon, A. 83
- Bagatti, B. 4
 Bagnall, R. 51
 Barclay, J.G.M. 27, 28
 Barr, J. 19
 Bauckham, R. 75
 Bauer, W. 76
 Bees, N.A. 88, 91, 92, 94
 Bérard, F. 2, 69
 Bickerman, E. 42
 Bij de Vaate, A. 8, 11
 Billanovich, M.P. 69
 Binder, D.D. 4
 Blass, F.J. 88, 93
 Bloedhorn, H. 5
 Bodel, J. 69
 Bohec, Y. le 4
 Bond, H.K. 74
 Brixhe, C. 89
 Brooten, B.J. 45, 55
 Bull, R.J. 23
 Burn, A.R. 50, 51
 Byatt, A. 18
- Calderini, A. 89
 Campbell, S.G. 25
 Cappelletti, S. 62
 Chancey, M.A. 14, 87
 Chaniotis, A. 39
 Chester, A. 32, 46, 53
 Clauss, M. 17, 51
 Claußen, C. 35, 54
 Cockle, E.H. 20
 Cohen, S.J.D. 40, 58
 Collar, A. 10, 36, 37, 59
 Cook, B.F. 25
 Cotton, H.M. 6, 7, 20, 47
- Debrunner, A. 88, 93
 Delling, G. 42
- Dieterich, K. 88
 Dorfman, Sh. 79, 84
 Dressler, W. 93
 Duncan Jones, R.P. 51
- Edrei, A. 59, 65
 Eshel, E. 81
 Evans, C. 77
- Fasola, U.M. 92
 Feldman, L.H. 19, 27, 32, 44, 59, 61
 Figueras, P. 10
 Fischer, U. 62, 94
 Fitzmyer, J. 20
 Frey, J.-B. 2, 15
 Frier, B. 51
 Fuks, A. 4
- Gibson, E.L. 5, 13, 59, 60
 Gignac, F.T. 88–93
 Goodenough, E.R. 10, 20
 Goodman, M. 43, 53, 56, 64, 65
 Goren, Y. 83
 Grandgent, C.H. 88
 Groningen, B.A. van 25
 Gruen, E.S. 30
- Haacker, K. 74
 Hachlili, R. 19, 69
 Hadas, M. 16
 Harris, H.A. 30
 Hengel, M. 16
 Henten, J.W. van 8, 11
 Hezser, C. 46
 Hohlfelder, R.L. 23
 Holum, K.G. 23
 Hondius, J.J.E. 74
 Horbury, W. 5, 55, 56
 Horrocks, G. 88
 Horsley, G.H.R. 21, 55, 74, 88
 Horst, P.W. van der 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 14, 22, 27, 31, 33, 38, 39, 41, 45, 47, 50, 52, 62, 67, 74
 Hüttenmeister, F. 4
- Ilan, T. 48, 72, 79–80

- Jannaris, A.N. 88
 Jastrow, M. 56
 Jonge, H.J. de 70

 Kajanto, I. 51, 94
 Kant, H. 3, 12, 26
 Klaffenbach, G. 25
 Kleywegt, M. 56
 Kloner, A. 79
 Kraabel, A.T. 43
 Kraemer, R.S. 8, 9, 55
 Kretschmer, P. 92
 Kroll, J.H. 6, 43, 44

 Lange, N.R.M. de 55
 Lemaire, A. 67
 Lémonon, J.-P. 74
 Leon, H.J. 4, 13, 19, 37, 88, 92, 93, 94
 Levine, L.I. 15, 16, 18, 19, 35, 43, 45, 54, 58, 60, 72
 Levinskaya, I. 6, 27, 28, 37, 56
 Lewis, D.M. 4
 Lieberman, S. 14, 19, 20
 Lifshitz, B. 2, 4, 12, 16, 20, 61, 63, 91, 93
 Lüderitz, G. 4

 MacMullen, R. 17
 Martin, R.P. 24
 Mason, S. 71
 Mastandrea, P. 38
 Mazar, B. 4
 McLean, B.H. 9, 78
 Mendels, D. 59, 65
 Meyer, E.A. 17
 Meyers, E.M. 68, 87
 Milik, J.T. 4
 Millar, F.G.B. 20, 29, 47
 Miranda, E. 6
 Misgav, H. 7, 11
 Mitchell, S. 10, 32, 36–38, 40, 43, 61
 Müller, N. 88, 91, 92, 94
 Muscarella, O.W. 69
 Mussies, G. 14, 20, 48, 88, 94

 Naveh, J. 4
 Nilsson, M.P. 42
 Noy, D. 5, 16, 23, 24, 34, 35

 Oehler, J. 9

 Ogle, M. 63
 Olsson, B. 4

 Painter, J. 75
 Panayotov, A. 5
 Park, J.S. 62, 63
 Parrot, A. 34
 Peres, I. 77
 Pesch, R. 76
 Peters, M.K.H. 33
 Pfeiffer, R.H. 18
 Pilhofer, P. 74
 Porter, S.E. 21
 Pratscher, W. 75
 Price, J.J. 7, 11, 17, 35, 53, 87

 Raban, A. 23
 Rabin, Ch. 21
 Rahmani, Y. 4, 69, 71, 72, 81
 Rajak, T. 5, 12, 16, 17, 35, 62
 Reeg, G. 4
 Reich, R. 80
 Reynolds, J. 13, 22, 39, 40, 53
 Robert, L. 90
 Rosén, H.B. 15, 20
 Roth-Gerson, L. 4, 20
 Runesson, A. 4
 Rutgers, L.V. 13, 50, 63

 Safrai, S. 7
 Safrai, Z. 7
 Saller, R.P. 69
 Sandys, J.E. 25
 Scheiber, A. 4
 Schmitt, R. 21
 Schürer, E. 15
 Schwabe, M. 4
 Schwartz, J. 7
 Seager, A.R. 43
 Segni, L. di 6
 Sevenster, J.N. 19, 20
 Shanks, H. 77, 83, 84
 Smith, J.Z. 94
 Smith, M. 26
 Sokoloff, M. 76
 Spolsky, B. 20
 Stemberger, G. 18
 Stern, M. 4, 10
 Strubbe, J.H.M. 30

- Tannenbaum, R. 13, 22, 39, 40, 53
Tcherikover, V.A. 4, 8–9
Tomson, P.J. 7
Trebilco, P. 27, 33, 36, 39, 44, 45
Treu, K. 47

Waelkens, M. 12, 25
Wanders, B. 37, 40
Williams, M.H. 6, 7, 8, 11, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33,
35, 39, 44, 47, 48, 49, 52, 53, 54, 55, 58, 59,
60, 66
Wolfe, M. 24
Woodhead, A.G. 25

Yardeni, A. 71, 87

Zias, J. 87
Zuntz, G. 38

Index of Names and Subjects

- Acmonia 116
- Afterlife 62–64, 106
- Age at death 50–52
- Age rounding 51–52
- Angel veneration 136
- Apameia (Syria) 113
- Aphrodisias 1, 39–41, 118–123, 124
- Apollo 38, 141
- Apostoli* 159
- Aquila 154
- Archisynagôgissa* 137
- Archisynagôgos* 113, 116, 156
- Argos 142
- Arsinoe 107
- Asia Minor 27–45
- Aster 161
- Astral immortality 131

- Babylonian Sibyl 128
- Beth She'arim 17, 104, 105, 106
- Biblical quotations 62, 164
- Bilingualism 20–21
- Blessing 145, 164
- Blues (circus faction) 124
- Bouleutai* 40, 43–44

- Caesarea Maritima 22–23
- Caiaphas 74
- Calcarienses*, synagogue of the 150
- Charon 49
- Cheleq* (share) 105
- City council see *bouleutai*
- Constitutio Antoniniana* 142, 144
- Corycus 130
- Council of elders 157
- Criteria of Jewishness 8
- Curses 33

- Dating inscriptions 25
- Day of Atonement 136
- Dekania* 122
- Delphi 141
- Diaspora 27, 46–47, 59, 65 *et passim*
- Dis Manibus* 8, 26, 60
- Distorting factors 17–21

- Edessa 115
- Epigraphic habit 73
- Epigraphic losses 7
- Epithets 57–58
- Ethnarch 142
- Eumoirei* 105

- Father of the synagogue 134
- Festal names 30, 48
- Forgeries 69, 78–87

- Genres 12–13
- Gerousiarchês* 113
- Godfearers 37, 39–42, 56–57, 121–122, 132, 158
- Golgoi (Cyprus) 139
- Greek language 13, 14–16, 47, 88–95
- Greens (circus faction) 124

- Hades 49, 104, 109, 111
- Hebraïkê* 139
- Hebrew 11
- Henotheism 38
- Heptamyxion* 125
- Herod the Great 100
- Hierapolis 29–31, 125
- Homeric language 104, 107, 109, 140
- Honorary titles 55–56
- Honorific inscriptions 12, 156
- Hundred and twenty years 52

- Identity, Jewish 44–45
- Integration 32
- Ioudaios* 29–30, 115
- Ioudaïsmos* 57, 150
- Israel Antiquities Authority 78–86

- James, brother of Jesus 67–87
- Jerusalem 22–23, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103
- Jerusalem temple 97, 98, 99, 100, 127
- Jewish names 9
- Jewish symbols 10
- Joseph, father of Jesus 70–71
- Judaeo-Christianity 75
- Judaeo-Greek culture 64–65
- Judgement, divine 145
- Julia Severa 31–32, 61, 116

- Kastelli Kissamou 137
Kibotos 35–36

Laos 140
 Larissa 140
 Latin 13, 144
 Leontopolis 23–24, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111
 Lethe 49, 110
 Lettering type 71
 Living quarters, Jewish 31

 Maledictions 30
 Manumission inscriptions 12–13, 59–60, 132, 141, 161
 Menorah 12, 125
 Mobility 47–48, 144
 Moira 49, 104, 107
 Morphology 91–93
 Mother of the synagogue 162
 Mourning 109
 Mythological motifs 49

 Naples 161
 Neglect of Jewish epigraphy 2
 Nicanor 99
 Noah 35–36
Nomen sacrum 138

 Onias IV 110
 Onomastics 48–49
 Ossuary 67–68

 Pagan donors 61
 Pagan influences 49
 Palaeo-Hebrew 101
 Panticapaeum 132
 Patina 69–70, 78, 82
 Patriarch(s) 134, 142, 151, 159
Philentol(i)os 57, 152
Philonom(i)os 57, 152
 Phonology 89–91
 Phrygia 29–39
 Piety 147
 Pilgrims 98
 Prayer of revenge 135
Presbyteria 137, 157
Presbyteroi 157
 Private altars 41–42
 Professions 52–53

Pronoia 125
 Proselytes 56–57, 121–122, 148, 162
Proseuchê 132
 Providence 125
 Purple industry 31

 Rabbi 58–59, 159, 163
 Rabbinic Judaism 58–59
 Regina 64, 146
 Representativeness 16–20, 50
 Resurrection of the body 63, 146
 Rheneia 135
 Righteous ones 151, 154
 Rights, Jewish 28
 Rome 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155
Rosalia 32–33

Sabbateion 128
 Sacrifice 42
Sambatheion 128
 Sambation 9
 Sardis 43–44, 125
 Senia (Croatia) 144
 Sickle of the curse 34
 Sigla 96
 Slave 141
 Solar aspects of Yahwism 136
 Speaking stone 110
 Split diaspora 59, 65
 Stobi 133
 Stone industry 71
 Sun (god) 136
 Synagogue 53–54, 98, 127, 128, 132, 134, 139, 150, 162
 Syntax 93–94
 Syracuse 145
 Syros 138

Teuseves 158
 Thalassa 149
 Theophoric names 48–49
 Theos Hypsistos 10, 36–38, 136
 Thyateira 128
 Torah 44, 45, 53, 57, 98, 134, 138, 146, 152, 153, 155
 Tortosa 163
 Treasury of the community 129, 130
 Trilingualism 20–21

Turronius Cladus 116

Underrepresentation of children and women
50–51

Uneven distribution, geographical and
chronological 21–22, 24–25, 50

Unprovenanced artefacts 68, 83–84

Venosa (Venusia) 23–24, 156, 157, 158, 159

Virginity 34

Vow 134

War captives 161

Warning inscription 97

Women 55–57

Wrath of God 34

Yom Kippur 136

About the Author

Born on July 4, 1946, in Driebergen, The Netherlands

Primary school 1952–1958

Secondary school ('Gymnasium Alpha') 1958–1964

Study of Classical and Semitic philology at Utrecht University 1964–1971

PhD in Theology at Utrecht University 1978 (supervisor: Willem C. van Unnik)

Career at the Faculty of Theology of Utrecht University

Research Assistant 1969–1971

Junior lecturer in New Testament Exegesis 1971–1978

Senior lecturer in New Testament Exegesis 1979–1990

Full Professor of New Testament Exegesis, Early Christian Literature, and the Jewish and Hellenistic World of Early Christianity 1990–2006

Retirement 2006

In June 2008, Pieter van der Horst received a Festschrift entitled:

Empsychoi Logoi: Religious Innovations in Antiquity. Studies in Honour of Pieter Willem van der Horst (eds. A. Houtman, A.F. de Jong, M. Misset-van de Weg; Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 73), Leiden: Brill, 2008; xxiv+646 pp.

His Academic Memberships Include

Member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen) since 1994

Member of the Koninklijke Hollandse Maatschappij der Wetenschappen since 1995

Other

Lady Davis Professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, autumn 1990

Research Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, spring and summer 1997

Research Fellow at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study, autumn 1995

Research Fellow of the Netherlands Institute of Advanced Study 2001–2002
 Research Fellow of the Netherlands Institute of Advanced Study 2006–2007
 Guest lecturer at the University of South-Africa in Pretoria, May 1993
 Guest lecturer at Princeton University, March 1996

Pieter van der Horst gave guest lectures at the universities of Amsterdam, Nijmegen, London, Cambridge (UK), Münster, Berlin, Leipzig, Jena, Paris, Aix-en-Provence, Budapest, Warsaw, Cracow, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Beersheba, Haifa, Johannesburg, Durban-Westville, Stellenbosch, Toronto, San Diego.

He was/is Member of the Editorial Boards of

a *Monograph Series*

Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und Urchristentums = Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity (since 1992)
 Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature (since 1996)
 Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum (1986–2010)
 Jewish-Christian Perspectives (1998–2006)
 Joodse Bronnen (1998–2004)
 Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology (2000–2008)

b *Journals*

Journal for the Study of Judaism (since 1998)
 Journal of Graeco-Roman Christianity and Judaism (1998–2008)
 Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift (1985–1990 and 1995–2008)
 The Second Century (1980–1990)
 New Testament Studies (1988–1990)
 Zutot: Perspectives on Jewish Culture (2002–2012)

His Books Include

(with J. Mansfeld) *An Alexandrian Platonist Against Dualism. Alexander of Lycopolis' Treatise "Critique of the Doctrines of Manichaeus" Translated with an Introduction and Notes*, Leiden: Brill, 1974
The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides with Introduction and Commentary (Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha 4), Leiden: Brill, 1978
Aelius Aristides and the New Testament (Studia ad Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti 6), Leiden: Brill, 1980

- (with T. Baarda) *De spreuken van Pseudo-Phocylides. De spreuken van Pseudo-Menander*, Kampen: Kok, 1982
- Chaeremon, Egyptian Priest and Stoic Philosopher. The Fragments Collected and Translated with Explanatory Notes* (Etudes Préliminaires des Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain 101), Leiden: Brill, 1984; 2nd ed. 1987
- Joods-hellenistische poëzie*, Kampen: Kok, 1987
- De onbekende god. Essays over de joodse en hellenistische achtergrond van het vroege christendom* (Utrechtse Theologische Reeks 2), Utrecht: Universiteitsdrukkerij, 1988
- (with G. Mussies), *Studies on the Hellenistic Background of the New Testament* (Utrechtse Theologische Reeks 10), Utrecht: Rijksuniversiteit, 1990
- De Bijbelse Geschiedenis van Pseudo-Philo; een joodse hervertelling van de Bijbel uit de eerste eeuw van onze jaartelling* (Na de Schriften 7), Kampen: Kok, 1990
- Essays on the Jewish World of Early Christianity* (NTOA 14), Fribourg-Göttingen: Universitätsverlag—Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990
- Ancient Jewish Epitaphs. An Introductory Survey of a Millennium of Jewish Funerary Epigraphy* (300 BCE–700 CE), Kampen: Kok-Pharos, 1991
- Het Nieuwe Testament en de Joodse grafinscripties uit de hellenistisch-romeinse tijd* (Utrechtse Theologische Reeks 12), Utrecht: Rijksuniversiteit, 1991
- Studies over het jodendom in de oudheid*, Kampen: Kok, 1992
- Hellenism—Judaism—Christianity. Essays on Their Interaction* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 8), Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1994; second enlarged edition, Leuven: Peeters, 1998
- Gebeden uit de antieke wereld. Grieks-Romeinse, Joodse en Christelijke gebedsteksten in het Nederlands vertaald en toegelicht*, Kampen: Kok, 1994
- Het leven van Simeon de pilaarheilige. De twee Griekse levensbeschrijvingen vertaald, ingeleid en toegelicht* (Utrechtse Theologische Reeks 30), Utrecht: Universiteit, 1995
- Woestijn, begeerte en geloof. Het leven van de eerste monniken in Egypte. De Historia monachorum in Aegypto (ca. 400 na Chr.) vertaald en toegelicht* (Christelijke bronnen 8), Kampen: Kok, 1995
- Bronnen voor de studie van de wereld van het vroege christendom, deel 1: Joodse bronnen*, Kampen: Kok, 1997
- Bronnen voor de studie van de wereld van het vroege christendom, deel 2: Pagane bronnen*, Kampen: Kok, 1997
- De Woestijnvaders. Levensverhalen van kluizenaars uit het vroege christendom*, Amsterdam: Prometheus, 1998
- Het Boek der Hemelse Paleizen (3 Henoch): een joods mystiek geschrift uit de late oudheid, uit het Hebreeuws vertaald en toegelicht* (Joodse Bronnen 2), Kampen: Kok, 1999
- Sortes: het gebruik van heilige boeken als lotsorakels in de oudheid* (Mededelingen van de Afdeling Letterkunde van de Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Nieuwe reeks, deel 62, no. 3), Amsterdam: KNAW, 1999

- Mozes, Plato, Jezus. Studies over de wereld van het vroege christendom*, Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2000
- De profeten. Joodse en christelijke legenden uit de oudheid*, Amsterdam: Athenaeum—Polak & van Genneep, 2001
- Die Prophetengräber im antiken Judentum* (Franz-Delitzsch-Vorlesung 2000), Münster: Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum, 2001
- Japheth in the Tents of Shem. Studies on Jewish Hellenism in Antiquity* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 32), Leuven: Peeters, 2002
- Philo's Flaccus: The First Pogrom. Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series 2), Leiden: Brill, 2003 (reissued in a paperback edition by the Society of Biblical Literature in 2005)
- Joden in de Grieks-Romeinse wereld. Vijftien miniaturen* (Utrechtse Studies 5), Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2003
- De Samaritanen. Geschiedenis en godsdienst van een vergeten groepering*, Kampen: Kok, 2004; tweede, herziene en uitgebreide uitgave, *De Samaritanen: Geschiedenis en godsdienst van een Israëlitische gemeenschap*, Amsterdam: Amphora Books, 2013
- Het vroege jodendom van A tot Z. Een kleine encyclopedie over de eerste duizend jaar (ca. 350 v.c.-650 n.c.)*, Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2006
- Jews and Christians in Their Graeco-Roman Context. Selected Essays on Early Judaism, Samaritanism, Hellenism, and Christianity* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 196), Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006
- De mythe van het joodse kannibalisme. Rede uitgesproken ter gelegenheid van zijn afscheid van de Universiteit Utrecht op 16 juni 2006, plus de op last van de Universiteit Utrecht uit de rede verwijderde passages* (CIDI-informatiereeks), Soesterberg: Uitgeverij Aspekt, 2006 = *The Myth of Jewish Cannibalism: A Chapter in the History of Antisemitism* (Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, vol. VIII no. 3), Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2008
- Paula in Palestina. Hieronymus' biografie van een rijke Romeinse christin* (Ad Fontes 3), Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2006
- (with Judith H. Newman) *Early Jewish Prayers in Greek* (Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature), Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008
- Tussen haat en bewondering: Grieken en Romeinen over het jodendom. Een selectie van teksten vertaald en toegelicht*, Soesterberg: Uitgeverij Aspekt, 2009
- Daniël de pilaarheilige (409–493). Zijn levensbeschrijving uit het Grieks vertaald en toegelicht* (Bronnen van spiritualiteit), Averbode: Altiora—Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2009
- Joodse miniatuurtjes: Vijftig korte schetsen van joods leven en denken*, Amsterdam: Amphora Books, 2009
- (met Jan Willem Drijvers) *Keizer Constantijn. Zijn levensbeschrijving door Eusebius vertaald, ingeleid en toegelicht*, Hilversum: Verloren, 2012

Studies in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity (Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 87), Leiden: Brill, 2014

Het joodse koninkrijk van Himyar en de christelijke martelaars van Nadjran (forthcoming)

Books Edited and Co-Edited by Pieter van der Horst Include

M.A. Knibb and P.W. van der Horst (eds.), *Studies on the Testament of Job* (SNTS Monograph series 66), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989

P.W. van der Horst (ed.), 'Vorwort, Einleitung, Fußnoten, Appendizes und Register,' in: Willem Cornelis van Unnik, *Das Selbstverständnis der jüdischen Diaspora in der hellenistisch-römischen Zeit*, aus dem Nachlaß herausgegeben und bearbeitet von P.W. van der Horst (Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums 17), Leiden: Brill, 1993

J.W. van Henten & P.W. van der Horst (eds.), *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy* (Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums 21), Leiden: Brill, 1994

K. van der Toorn, B. Becking & P.W. van der Horst (eds.), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Leiden: Brill, 1995; second, extensively revised edition, Leiden: Brill—Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999

P.W. van der Horst (ed.), *Aspects of Religious Contact and Conflict in the Ancient World* (Utrechtse Theologische Reeks 31), Utrecht: Theologische Faculteit, 1995

K.A. Algra, P.W. van der Horst & D.T. Runia (eds.), *Polyhistor. Studies in the History and Historiography of Ancient Philosophy Presented to Jaap Mansfeld on his Sixtieth Birthday* (Philosophia Antiqua 72), Leiden: Brill, 1996

P.W. van der Horst, H.W. Havelaar, L. Teugels (eds.), *The Use of Sacred Books in the Ancient World* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 22), Leuven: Peeters, 1998

P.W. van der Horst, M.J.J. Menken & J.F.M. Smit (eds.), *Persuasion and Dissuasion in Early Christianity, Ancient Judaism, and Hellenism* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 33), Leuven: Peeters, 2003

C. Breytenbach and Pieter W. van der Horst (eds.), *Sparsa Collecta, vol. 4. The Collected Essays of W.C. van Unnik*, Leiden: Brill, 2014

For more details and an extensive bibliography of Pieter W. van der Horst, including his articles and book reviews, see his website:

www.pietervanderhorst.com